September 21, 1979 #118

RAM

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BOB DYLAN EXCLUSIVE

NEW ALBUM PREVIEW

LED ZEPPELIN

CROWD'S CHAMPS
CRITIC'S CHUMPS

IAN DURY

THE 1979 INTERVIEW

THE KNACK

ONE HIT WONDERS!

JOE JACKSON

RICHARD CLAPTON

JERRY LEE LEWIS... 'THE CHINA SYNDROME'... LRB... ALIENS... STREET TALK... MONDO ROCK

He was back from holidays. "Oh," said the cleaner. "So you're back." He dumped half the contents of the Ed's rubbish bin onto his lap. "We had a wonderful time when you weren't here," said his faithful staff. "Doesn't anyone remember?" he mused. "I used to be Anthony O'Grady." He looked at the rubbish bin contents in his lap. "My God," he smiled,

"THIS WEEK'S LETTERS PAGE"

PO Box 746,
Darlinghurst
NSW 2010

PROBLEM

I am seventeen years of age, with long blonde hair, blue eyes, and absolutely no breasts whatsoever.

Still, with the right makeup, I do look a little like Debby Harry.

Why then do all the other boys in my dorm make fun of me?

John Thomas Lummp

Be thankful they don't want to go to bed with you.

LOST IN PERTH

I think you had better drag out the old overflow column because I've got some more questions. Where, in Oz, can we send away for badges, t-shirts and catalogues of such stock available - ie are there any major distributors of these articles in Oz? Is there a Clash fan club? Are there any decent r'n'r (or punk) publications originating in this country (apart from yourselves)? Will you please write a review of one of the XTC gigs (we missed out on seeing them - as usual)? Will we in Perth ever see The Angels or are they just an E.S. myth used to counter the reality of Dave Warner?

Your magazine needs reviews of any r'n'r books. It should also be doing more reviews of albums that are only available on import (thus costing more). I also think that more reviews have to be made of the new crop of artists, especially from the UK. Well-established artists (Dylan, Floyd, Joni Mitchell, etc) have large followings and their works have to be publicly analysed. But the new, young musos are the future of r'n'r and they provide the flux necessary to regenerate the ideals of music as an art, or as popular social expression. Groups like Siouxsie, Stiff Little Fingers, Pop Group, Simple Minds, The Jam, Buzzcocks, Magazine, The Yachts, Mekons - ad nauseam - are the new wave. You might not agree with their styles, but they sure beat shit out of Georgio Marauder (intentional mispelling), so give them, and us, a fair chance.

I live in Perth and, believe me, Joe Strummer, when it comes to rock'n'roll boredom London has nothing on Perth. Perth is burning. There are only a handful of bands who fight against the odds to present hard, biting, meaningful and original r'n'r in this town. One such band The Manikins are touring the east states now. Could RAM review one of their gigs please - we like them but we would be accused of parochialism if we rave too much - so how about it? Punters - my advice is to go see them if you want to move like you've never moved before on a dance floor. Also look out for the Scientists and the Rockets.

Frustrated Punter/Satisfied Reader

Have you read RAM lately? XTC article/review last ish, also most bands you've named have appeared in Vinylising. Badge makers, poster printers etc frequently advertise wares in RAM. Dugites and Manikins (both Perth) next ish. Imports again, hmmmmmmm?

LOU

After listening for the umpteenth time to Lou Reed's live version of *Berlin* on the album *Live: Take No Prisoners* I'm finally stimulated to write.

Richard Guilliatt is right about *The Bells* - Reed sure has put out some pretty ordinary stuff, but just when a classic like *No Prisoners* comes along, what happens? No Aussie release - only available from import shops. Recent live releases from contemporaries like Dylan and Bowie pale in comparison to *No Prisoners* - Reed has that knack, like Dylan, of making a new song out of a live version, but also makes you feel like you're right there at the concert: the rawness and immediate electric atmosphere of this album make all other live gigs I've heard sound like studio jobs (D. Bowie esq take note). Songs like *Coney Island Baby* and *Berlin* are so powerful and emotive, bla bla bla.....

If this sounds like a review - it is!

How many other good albums are failing to reach our shores? Thank Christ for imports.

Steve Davies

P.S. Why don't YOU review albums like above, so WE know they're available.

'Take No Prisoners', as noted in a previous RAM somewhere, was not released in Oz due to Lou's copyright contracts. Overseas release was shared between the Arista and RCA companies. No, it doesn't make sense to us either.

IMPORTS

As an educated and literate rock follower, I am an ardent fan of your magazine, but there is one trait that concerns me in your approach to your rock material. Being in my late twenties I am finding more and more musical satisfaction in artists that lie in areas outside of the mainstream and convention, but which unfortunately are bypassed or ignored in the rock press because they are considered anti-commerical or too cultish. I suppose I mean that RAM ought to review and cover a wider range of Imported records as currently so much great rock and roll is being left undiscovered or smothered by the weight of safe, *Countdown* type artists. Let me give you a few examples of music I've recently found, but which you won't find or see on telly or in RAM. Slaughter and the Dogs (now defunct) are a manic rockin' band in the best traditions of the Stooges with power chording and screaming vocals. A Pommie band. So too are the Buzzcocks, a band that features ferocious hard rhythm guitar playing that saturates the earphones. The Only Ones are melodic but powerful with an excellent lead guitar and a nasal bass voice that follows you everywhere. From America, Link Wray's *Bullshot* is heavy red hot riff playing, fifties based, but seventies presented. Roy A. Loney (formerly with the Flamin' Groovies) and his new band, The Phantom Movers, combine acoustic and electric guitars, pulsating bass and drums and piercing vocals to present relaxed but driving original music. And this is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg available to any conscientious and enthusiastic rock and roll student that wishes to learn. So how about it RAM? How about a column on import records for people like me who wish to flee the saturation coverages given to the Bowies, Angels, Discos, Abbas, etc, etc, etc, etc, etc, etc.

Mike Joske

We used to review imports regularly but stopped when record company pressure on the stores grew so concerted it seemed they'd be wiped out entirely if attention was continually being drawn to them. This doesn't mean we won't review imports again though.

NZ IN OZ

After seeing The Reels, Hello Sailor and Dragon at the Stagedoor last night, I would like to make the following comments.

1. The Reels - inflexible treatment of songs, losing patience, can't keep an open mind. Face it kids (from Dubbo) there are more ways to skin cats. You've bored me.
2. Hello Sailor - talent. Strong Kiwi complement in audience. Australia doesn't *seem* to like you. Taste in their bums. You were just great. Where do I queue? How long can you stay?
3. Dragon - 30% of crowd went home. Why? Hello Sailor finished? Too late for the Stagedoor teenager? *Motor City Connection* worth the wait - *best* thing all night, inc. the rest of Dragon's colourless offering. Just how dormant can the reptile be in Winter? Is *Power Play* worth holding one's breath for? Life goes on. It's easy when all one has to do is breathe. Still, how much breathing space can one buy for $4, at the Stagedoor?

Noman's Fan
(left wondering - in Wonderland)

REELED

Thank you to The Reels for providing the only two really enjoyable nights I have had in a Melbourne Rock Venue. I hope to make it three or four next time you're back in town.

By the way, why is it that I can see these guys for free or 99¢ when I have to pay $5 or so to see supposedly Australia's Top Bands?

Perhaps being into music and invention doesn't count for too much anymore. Anyway Reels - thank you again. A black sheep in a very white flock.

K. Stephenson

FALCONS

Very funny last ish. Full page ad for the Falcons' new LP. e.g. Come of Age(s), crisp, clear....etc.

Directly opp. Letters Page girl warns a Falcon of something to look forward to. I larfed till I stopped.

MOLLY DEFENDED

Countdown seems to be prime target for steaming shit that's in the air at the moment, and poor old Meldrum seems to be where most of it is landing.

He does a good job of presenting a polished weekly show that appeals to a wide age group.

It has a pretty good standard each show and has been the springboard for many acts both local and overseas. The guy's face is an indication of how much work he puts into each and every show. I can't think of anyone who could do his job and what would the show be like without him? In effect it *is* his show.

But on the other hand he still can be a pain in the arse.

As to Meldrum's power, it's gone with the push of a button.

Why did Richard Clapton come back and eat his own shit? (At his manager's insistence? I think not. Who works for who?) Because it's not good practice to bite the hand that helps feed you.

Some bands get slagged off for appearing on the show by their fans, but what are their fans doing watching it in the first place? Hypocrites!

The importance of *Countdown* to Australian television is large, but the importance of television to your life?

I.N. Perspective

SPORTS WANTED

Please send Sports over to N.Z. You'd be doing us a big favour. Seems like a fair exchange for Hello Sailor, Mi-Sex and Dragon.

David Oo
Auckland, N.Z.

LOST PURPLE

I am writing this letter in curiosity about a now defunct band. The band in question is the original Deep Purple of Ritchie Blackmore, Ian Gillan, Roger Glover, Jon Lord and Ian Paice and I am wondering what these members are dong at present, whether they're still in the music business or whether they have retired and settled down. I know Blackmore has Blackmore's Rainbow and I know Roger Glover was involved in the soundtrack of the *Butterfly's Ball* LP, but their present movements escape me.

I am an old Deep Purple fan from way back and I played through all their old albums today from *In Rock* to *Come Taste The Band*, but I'm afraid the original in this case was the best.

Keep on Printing

Phil Townsend

Since the copious gossip notes in RAM about ex-Purples don't seem to have been assimilated, please try the record review pages this ish.

EXTRACTING DIGITS

After much analysis of the subject it is my proven opinion that SKYHOOKS are god, not chicken legs Marc Hunter (sorry pink punk). How's about a FREE 'hooks concert. How about having THE ALIENS for the support band?

For all Skyhook fans who care, watch out - "DENISE" (EGO album, dummy) is back (from Greece) ready to lead the crusade for SKYHOOKS VS THE WORLD.

Due to my finger operation I had to depart from my sunny Aussie shores and my beloved Hooks. While I was away I did not stray, I still received RAM (courtesy of airmail), I listened to stacks of bootlegs sent to me, and I must say I was VERY impressed with the 2 new additions (not fingers, Tony and Bob). Well I couldn't take being un-hooked from them anymore so I flew back to Skyhooks' birthright - Ozzie. On my way back from Greece I called in at the UK and the pommie punks are going wild over the *Women In Uniform* single. Have to go, the fanclub headquarters is filling up fast with new members to join. What's a Guilliatt/Withers? At least Greece didn't have any.

Luv Denise
Skyhooks number 1 fan
P.S. Was gonna send you a finger, but I couldn't hold my pen if I cut another one off.

RENEE

Is there any way I can get in contact with Renee Geyer? She's my favourite female singer. Maybe you could put in an address spot where you give the addresses of singers and bands, why not even a crossword as well?

Dedicated Nuisance

Try sky-writing.

THREE CHAIRS FOR NARRABEEN

'Twas Thursday 2nd August. The Angels had just appeared on stage at the Antler. The room was very crowded when this fuckwit threw an empty "GLASS". To my surprise it bounced off a spectator's head and onto the floor. I checked my "glass" and lo-and-behold it is plastic. An excellent idea. I don't know how many other pubs use this idea but it's great, not to mention the money they must save on broken schooners.

I thought the unnecessary violence that occurs at gigs had finally been subdued, only to find out my friend was crushed with a chair. So let's have a cheer for the Antler management as they are halfway there in stopping the bloodshed that unfortunately occurs these days. All they have to do now is invent a sponge rubber chair. Let's hope that other hotels are using the same idea.

KJG 002
Beacon Hill

Alert punters will know RAM actioned for plastic glasses at The Antler some months ago. But alas! The Antler actually serves a combination of glass and plastic and punters are still bleeding.

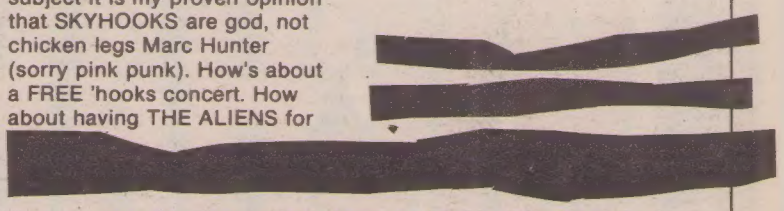
REX

Who does Stuart Coupe think he is? God or something? If Rex Smith can give you an interview the best you can do is be grateful. I am sick of seeing people put down by journalists who think they are top shit. If Rex Smith was a punk, and his name was Dick Head you'd most probably give a good rave.

Anne, Northmead.

P.S. I am not a Rex Smith fan even though my letter sounds like one, but just a person who believes in rights.

Do you believe in a sense of humour?



It was over. Another letters page gone. He felt...Post Scriptal Tristesse.

D/RT

Jim Barnes shows Ian Moss what'll happen if he's late again. Keyboardist Don Walker explains why his song output has dried up - he's been gagged. (pic K.O'B.)

Eddie Money wriggles towards concert cash in Oz. (pic Simon Fowler/LFI)

The Rolling Stones have stomped on rumours they could...just could...tour Oz this year. They have a new album ready to come out in October or November says a RS spokesperson, but Mick'n'the boys won't be playing *anywhere* for the rest of this year, even though the proprietor of Sydney's **Stagedoor Tavern, Pat Jay**, offered 'em $100,000 to play at his gig. Jay made the offer through the **Paul Dainty Corporation**.

Upcoming definite tours: **Santana, Eddie Money** and **The Russell Morris Band** definitely scheduled for early October. Ticket price opined to be $12.90. Dates and venues in National Tours. Also in October, **Burl Ives**.

New **Cold Chisel** single *Baby It's My Turn To Cry* written by **Jim Barnes** instead of regular Chisel writer, keyboard player **Don Walker**. Chisel themselves about to cry at **A Day In The Sun** Festival at Fairfield, Sydney last week when, in front of approx 15,000, guitarist **Ian Moss** hadn't turned up as group was due on stage. Moss made it with 30 secs to spare. His explanation: "I must have been on another planet." Well, that one worked for **Jimi** we guess. In any case during the gig, when **Jim Barnes** asked for "dirty, smelly, sweaty, knickers" to be thrown on stage, a pair of crutches lobbed up with the scanties. Unfortunately, no miracle cure was recorded, the owner had to crawl backstage to retrieve same...

The Angels drew 3,500 to Cloudland in Brisbane breaking **XTC**'s weeks old venue record...

Despite denials from their record company **Air Supply** appear to be now officially kaputski....

Attic Records in **Canada** have picked up **Skyhooks**' *Guilty Till Proven Insane*. But The Hooks now not gigging much in Oz and gathering rumours indicate they're on the verge of calling it quits.

Massive slumps in US and Oz record industries now official with daily media picking up on plight nearly a year after RAM first sounded the doom bell last year. To no one's surprise, high price of albums and low price of blank cassettes is seen as the reason for volume drop of lp sales and booming sales of tape.

Eagles finally set for release of new album *The Long Run* on Sept 15.

LRB currently in America preparing live album *Backstage Pass*. The cover has already been shot in Oz. Xmas looks a good bet for release.

In England, **Elvis Costello** now including the **Jo Jo Zep And The Falcons** song *So Young* in his repertoire. It looks as though he'll be recording the song for his next album.

Faced with a distinct lack of success in Australia and even less hope of something happening overseas, **Contraband** have broken up. The split came when former AC/DC bassist **Mark Evans** quit and was quickly followed by vocalist **Owen Orford**.

According to the *London Evening News*, ex-Rolling Stone **Mick Taylor** now has a plastic membrane in his nose.

The original flesh was eroded by cocaine. Taylor's first solo album now released O/S and is available on import in Oz.

Mental As Anything's first album due in early October. Recorded in Sydney, it was mixed by producer **Cameron Allen** at the **Manor Studios** in London.

Rose Tattoo are still off the road and are now looking for a second guitarist as well as a new bass player. Rhythm guitarist **Mick Cox** has been sacked because of "personality problems" between himself and vocalist **Angry Anderson**. Cox is hoping to leave for England within a week or two for a gig there.

Bee Gees and **Paul McCartney** joined up to fund airlift of four elephants from drought stricken East Africa. The Bros Gibb stipulated *their* elephants be now known as **Barry, Maurice** and **Robin**. Paul wanted his named after the UK taxman.

Led Zeppelin went straight to No. 1 in **Sydney, Canberra** and **Newcastle** charts with new album *In Through The Out Door*.

Roger Voudouris scheduled to return to Oz as support for upcoming **Doobie Bros** tour. On the other hand, the Doobies have been scheduled to tour Oz no less than three times in the past two years and have pulled out each time...

That black embossed gunk on new **Talking Heads** album *Fear Of Music* is actually a representation of vocalist **David Byrne**'s kitchen floor. Dave wanted the covers sprayed with *real* lino but the record company said that was too expensive.

Midnight Oil attracting rave reviews and crowds on first NZ tour. Now it's back to finishing new album *Head Injuries*.

X Ray Spex, whose album *Germ Free Adolescents* was recently released in Australia (see review ish. 116) have reportedly split into two bands, one carrying on with the same name and featuring **Poly Styrene**, while the other, **Classix Nouveaux** features band members **Jak Airport** and **B.P. Hurding.**

Diana Ross has got a new record producer, **Jacques Morali**. Morali,best known for his work with **The Village People**, is preparing a song for Diana called *Y.W.C.A.* (...sigh...)

New **Fleetwood Mac** album *Tusks* now set for October. Mac are then set for an eight month world tour with probable first stop being Oz.

MI-Sex celebrated first year in Oz with a headlining concert at Sydney's Paddo Town Hall.

Angel Doc Neeson wonders where his bottom half's disappeared to. (pic Nick Udovic)

more D/RT

Sports meet president of their fan club. (pic K.O'B.)

Richard Lee tries a Dragon Power play. (pic Mark Green)

Andy Durant from Stars hospitalised for a month in Melbourne with a "mystery illness". **Mick Elliot** from **Western Flyer** is doing the temporary replacement gig.

Elton John taking himself and percussionist **Ray Cooper** on USA tour...

New **Foreigner** album set for release...meanwhile Foreigner producer **Gary Lyons** currently in studio with **Aerosmith** recording a new 'un under the working title of *Night In The Ruts*.

Swanee have *Crazy Dreams*, their first single, out. First album with eight original trax to follow later this month.

Frank Sinatra to do LRB's *Reminiscing*...**Kevin Borich** now in Europe for a 50-date tour, with **John Annas**'s replacement **John Watson**.

Sandy Pearlman took almost a year to record **The Clash**'s last album *Give 'em Enough Rope*. Last fortnight though the Brit true-punks recorded a third album in just three days with producer **Guy Stevens**.

ELO's *Discovery* now double-platinum in Oz.

Dragon's *Power Play* album with new boys **Billy Rogers** and **Richard Lee** now set for Sept 17 release. Meanwhile **Marc Hunter**'s album still officially called *Fiji Bitter*. It's one of the very few things that have stayed the same during chop'n'change record sessions.

Scottish rocker **Alex Harvey**, is in the studio recording a new album, *Back In The Depot*. It's Harvey's first studio work since he disbanded the **Sensational Alex Harvey Band** two years ago. The split came shortly after the band's '77 tour of Australia was cancelled following Harvey's nervous breakdown on the death of SAHB's road manager in an auto crash.

10cc are also back in the studio working on a new album. The band will be touring Australia early next year to make up for the tour that was cancelled earlier this year after Eric Stewart was seriously injured in a car crash.

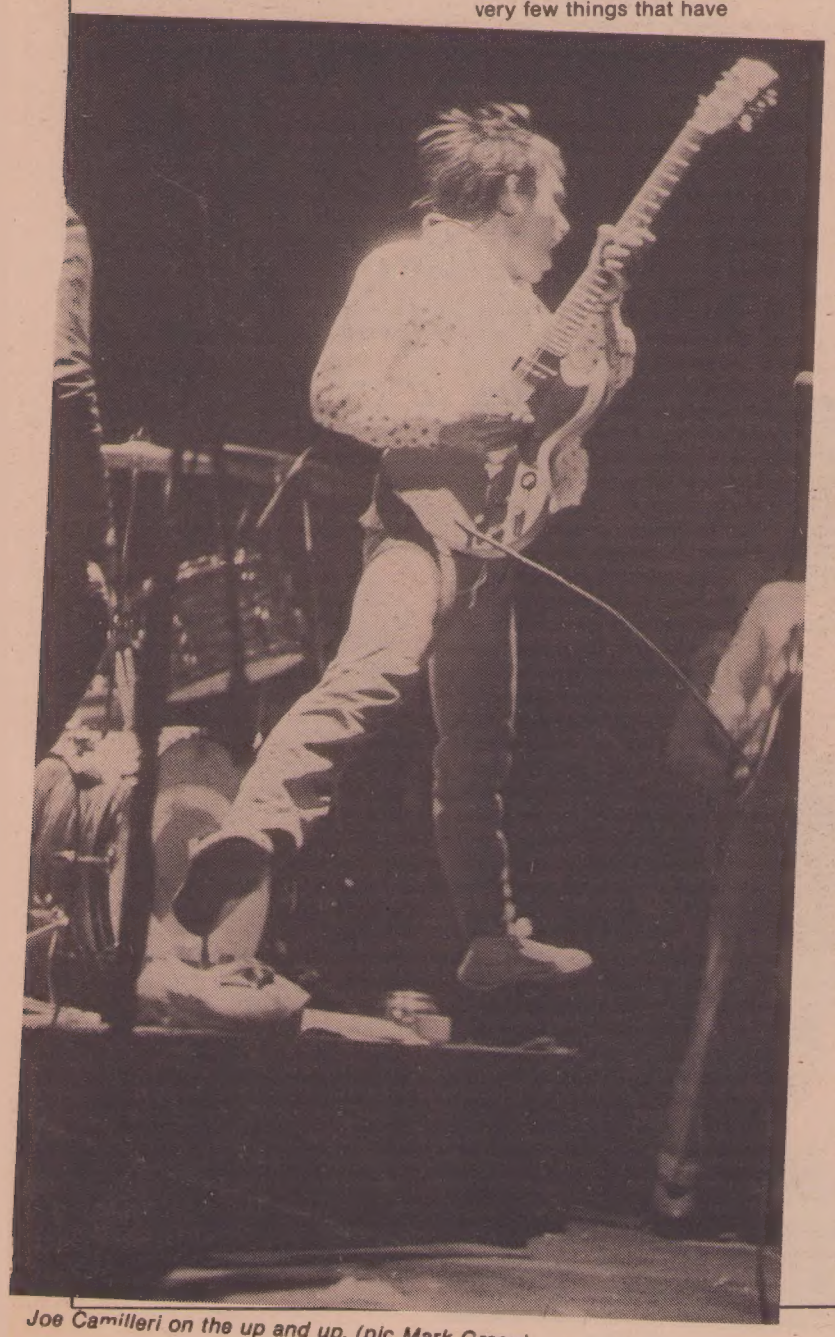
Iggy Jones from **Jimmy And The Boys** replied to a spitting girl by thumping her at the Matthew Flinders Hotel in Melb. After the show, the Ig was trapped inside dressing room by irate friends of the girl. He finally escaped inside an equipment roadcase.

Sports' first EP now re-released on **Zak** records. The Sports' first recording, it was produced by **Joe Camilleri** of **Jo Jo Zep**. Only thing is, when first released the EP cost $2.00. Now it's $4.00. **Willy Kerber** of Zak says only 500 will be pressed. Meanwhile the Sports' *Wedding Ring* EP now available in Oz. The Sports leave in mid-October to record another album in the UK with producer **Peter Solley**. Then to the USA where import copies of the first two albums are currently picking up FM airplay on the West Coast.

Joe Camilleri of **Jo Jo Zep** currently on super-upvibe due to long overdue chart success with *Screaming Targets* album and *Hit And Run* single.

In Brisbane, **4ZZZ-FM** broadcasting a series of interviews with **The Ramones**, **JJ Cale**, and UK band **Penetration**.

Mario Millo, ex-Sebastian Hardie and co-writer with **Jon English** on music for *Against The Wind* and *Six Ribbons*, now signed with Polygram Records and has first single *Life In Our Hands* released. Also in the can, an album, *Mario Millo - Epic III*.



Joe Camilleri on the up and up. (pic Mark Green)

One Last Divorce...In England, the popular **Tom Robinson Band** has broken up. Says leader Robinson: "After two and a half years, the band had become a bit tame and predictable. It was time to move on and try something fresh." Tom, currently working on a *(guess what!)* solo album, plans to form a new touring band early next year.

Alice Cooper not worried by the energy crisis; he still keeps 22 TV sets glowing eternally throughout his house.

Trax on upcoming **Blondie** album *Eat The Beat* can now be revealed as including *The Hardest Part, Union City Blue, Die Young Stay Pretty* and *Definition. Die Young* is reggae and was written in 1975. Blondie's **Jimmy Destri** describes *Definition* as "an incredible mix of a heavy metal rondo and Cossack music...phenomenal!" Meanwhile Blondie have signed with **Shep Gordon**, **Alice Cooper**'s manager, who yanked the band off the road after a gruelling three month US tour, then gave them precisely four rest days.

Chuck Berry definitely flunked in the 'Win Friends and Influence People' stakes when he played before 8,000 people at a British jazz festival last week. The stage was showered with beer cans when Berry left after playing for about three quarters of an hour; punters apparently angered by a short set and Berry's failure to return for an encore. Says Chuck: "I was contracted to play for 45 minutes and I gave them 49. Anyway, my last number is a disguised encore." Yeah, and beer-can throwing is disguised applause...

ANGEL'S RENT-A-BIN

You fill it we dump it 7 c. yds. containers.

859 4200, BH 844 2830

So this is what happens to Angels' audiences after the show. (The Age 21/7/79. Clipped by Ingrid Mausoleum).

INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS

Joan Armatrading
Sept
10 Festival Theatre, Adelaide
13 Entertainment Centre, Perth
15 Festival Hall, Melbourne
18 Regent Theatre, Sydney
19 Regent Theatre, Sydney
21 Festival Hall, Brisbane

Jerry Lee Lewis
Sept
4-8 St. Georges League Club
9-11 Penrith
12 Newcastle
13 Wentworthville
14-15 Mt. Pritchard
16 Ingelburn
17 Canberra
18 Albury
20 Melbourne

Demis Roussos
October
27 Perth Entertainment Centre
30 Adelaide Festival Theatre
November
3 Melbourne Festival Hall
6 Sydney Horden Pavilion
15 Brisbane Festival Hall

Kevin Coyne
Sept
10 West Aust Inst Technology
11 Adelaide University
12 Sydney Uni
14 Brisbane Cloudland
15-16 Sydney Kirk Gallery
18 Wollongong Uni
22-23 Sydney Kirk Gallery
25 Newcastle Uni

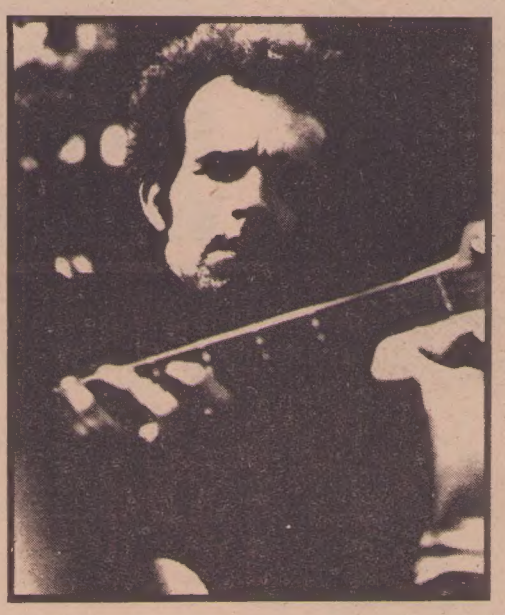
Ry Cooder
Sept
28 Sydney Regent Theatre
30 Canberra Theatre
October
2 Perth Concert Hall
6 Adelaide Festival Theatre
8 Melbourne Palais Theatre
11 Brisbane Festival Hall
14 Newcastle Civic Theatre

Santana...Eddie Money
Russell Morris Band
October
1 Adelaide Apollo Stadium
3 Melbourne Festival Hall
7 Brisbane Festival Hall
8 Sydney Hordern Pavilion

J.J. CALE
5
HIS LATEST ALBUM

Lovers of J.J. Cale will be pleased with the release of his new album "5". Cale is a stylist with a sound all his own that hovers somewhere between blues, country and Cajun music. It surely has to be his best album yet.

"5" 36995



ON RECORD & TAPE

Belle de Jour
SAINT TROPEZ

Featuring J.P. Vignon

Sensuous Disco From
A Powerful New Line-Up
With A Daring New Direction

"BELLE DE JOUR" 36899

Album or Cassette

AUSSIE ROCK

No dags on Street Talk

Stranded here in paradise how can a poor boy break the ice?' (*A Record With Pictures from New Zealand*). Street Talk took the plunge last night at Sydney's Strata Hotel, as the latest of the current wave of Kiwi bands to flee the Land of the Long Black Cloud. Except Street Talk aren't exactly desperate to emigrate: they're a top draw card in New Zealand and their debut album has been released worldwide; several members have toured Australia before and turned down Australian offers to return home instead, and this short tour (two weeks in Sydney, one in Melbourne) is just a visit to see 'ow it goes', according to lead singer/guitarist Hammond Gamble, earnestly waving an empty beer jug at me.

"We're not like Mi-Sex - we don't have to come over 'ere to find an audience.... but we came anyway..." This with a disarming grin, just like the one he cracked at the conclusion of the first set: "Don't go 'way....we get better later - I know it seems impossible..."

They have a right to be confident however, because this is a tight, experienced band. Though playing on gear borrowed at the last minute (their own was held up at Customs), Street Talk's sound was controlled and varied from the first number. Their dynamics were excellent - these guys really listened to each other.

The set flowed without fuss or fumble. Drummer Jim Lawrie was particularly impressive, accenting the vocals with Jim Keltner/Richie Hayward finesse, and Andy McDonald played tasty fingerpickin' bass ("I dropped my pick"). Stuart Pearce's piano was undermixed and as a result, a bit still, but Mike Caen's and Hammond Gamble's guitars were good, with some stylish blues licks from the latter. Gamble, an expatriate Pom, is an engaging frontman, and advanced surgery and a life of abuse have given him Tom Waits' larynx inside Steve Marriot's throat. Not every trans-Tasman import is a winner, but there's no dags on this band, no posing.... Just satisfying rock'n'roll.

Street Talk play mainly original, mainstream rock with Springsteen leanings on several numbers. Gamble gets incensed at heavy reference to this connection in the record company press release: "Hell, Fowley just told me to sing it (*Street Music*) more American and that's how it came out. All that stuff about ripping off *Born To Run* is rubbish - Mick Caen and I had written the chords ages ago and Fowley just supplied some words...I'd never even listened to Springsteen then."

"Fowley" of course is the notorious Kim Fowley, American producer and hype-star, who produced the *Street Talk* album early this year on his whirlwind 'audition' tour of Australasia. Unlike some of his projects, he did not 'discover' Street Talk - they had already had a minor hit with the single *Leaving the Country* (produced by another visiting Yank, Chris Hillman, formerly with the /Byrds). But he obviously shaped the album - he shares writing credits on seven of the ten songs, and the band liked working with him enough to consider asking him to produce their second album, "whenever that is". In many circles, association with Fowley is considered a liability, because he has a tendency to try to dominate his proteges - witness the sad demise of The Runaways. Street Talk however aren't worried, and judging from the warm reception given by the audience of industry heavies, Kiwi rockstars and other undesirables at their Australian debut, they can stand up for themselves.

Greg Taylor

Sherbet Kaputzi - but the Highway goes on

That's the crossover point - somewhere down the middle of that record." On one side the label reads *Skyline* - 'Sherbet'; on the other, *Heart Get Ready* - 'Highway'. The speaker is Garth Porter; he and Daryl Braithwaite have dropped by to deliver the last from one of Australia's most successful pop groups, and to announce that we can al breath again - Sherbet is but a memory, but the Highway goes on.

Because late last year the fizz was getting pretty low. Rumour had it that Sherbet were tired and disillusioned, that their celebrated signing with the Robert Stigwood Organisation had gone sour, that Daryl was at last going solo, and that a deep rift had grown with manager Roger Davies. The band said they were suspending operations: young girls wept in darkened bedrooms, men went about their work grim-faced, while o'erhead the rock press vultures hovered.

"We left it undecided when we stopped," Garth muses. "We didn't want to go on doing it just because we had commitments - we wanted a chance for everyone to see how they really felt. When we stopped I went 'Hallelujah' - I'd overdosed on the whole thing. At that stage I didn't care if the band never got together, or if I ever saw any of the guys again." Quite understandable - after eight years and thirteen albums, you'd want to sit in the sun and wait for the royalty cheques. Except, says Garth, "We're already advanced to the hilt with all our record deals all over the world." Amazing - despite years in the Top Ten, significant sales in the UK, and sell-out concert tours of Oz....I mean all *that* adds up to millions of dollars, it can't just disappear - have you looked behind the sofa....? Garth explains: "We spent the last two years touring the world at an incredible loss, financed by the success of *Howzat*, and to a lesser degree, *Photoplay*. Then we had the amazing cost of recording our last album (*Sherbet*) in LA - it was the first album where we had to fork out cold hard cash for a producer before we even got into the studio. And then just the houses we lived in - nice, comfortable, but nothing posh - but there were two of them at a thousand dollars each a month...and we were there for six months..."

So is this the guts? Sherbet are broke, and they're getting back together under the new name demanded by their American record company because they can't afford not to? Daryl and Garth look pained. "It costs more to keep the band going than not to. Our financial position is pretty disastrous: it's going to take a lot of hard work and determination before we can even find the money to do another album." So why bother? Everyone in the band has slipped quite easily into other activities: Harvey James and Alan Sandow have plenty of sessions and casual 'All-Star' type gigs; Tony Mitchell and Garth Porter have been producing other artists like Kim Durant and Anne Kirkpatrick; and Dazza's in the middle of a solo album in LA ("A rock album, not ballads. It's looking good, but I don't want to spend a lot of time on it."). Garth gazes into the middle distance and delivers The Vision? "We absolutely believe in our ability to do whatever we want to do. I believe in this band, and I want to play in this band and I don't want any of the members to change, and I want this band to evolve even further."

So the flag has been shown, a united front presented (and Roger Davies is still the manager - "there's no point in him being in Australia right now. He's over in America trying to get RSO off their butts.") A new album will be recorded in Sydney in September; meanwhile a compilation, under the old trading name, and entitled *Track Record* has already appeared. The local record rep gracefully cues their departure; as I watch two relaxed and dignified senior Oz rockers depart I hear Hordern Pavilion/ Festival Hall screams mute and slide into the distance. Garth and Dazza say they're glad they're out of *that* particular bubble nowadays.

Greg Taylor

Mondo Rock - a slow start but at last, a primal scream

Ross Wilson stands backstage at the

Bondi Lifesaver, towelling his newly-cropped brunette curls. "Stands" probably isn't the word, because Wilson's rarely off the balls of his sandshoes. His grey combat-style jumpsuit is cold with sweat, unzipped and dangling below his waist. He's slight and compact and pale in a healthy way, the features of his face are sharp and his eyes are pale arrows. He's alert; he's on top of it. And he's chipper, because tonight Mondo Rock rocked tight. Dragon's Paul Hewson is offering congratulations, Mondo are in various stages of sweaty undress and another gig is being packed away for the night.

Earlier, as the band left the stage for the first time and a well-packed house began to rev up their encore, Swap DJ Angry Anderson, who had clapped loudly after every number, made an announcement.

"Mondo Rock supported The Knack at the Hordern Pavilion today...Some bands have got it and some bands ain't got it. Come on and let 'em know."

People were grinning at that. The Knack had begun to leave a series of poor impressions around the Sydney punter set, and the word seemed to be that the "Nuke The Knack" campaign had begun to spread beyond America to Down Under. Mondo Rock were staggered when, after the Hordern 2SM show, The Knack's manager began a niggling campaign for Mondo Rock to go on AFTER his act, who were, at that time, holding down the number one position in both the American singles and albums charts with *My Sharona* and debut LP *Get The Knack*. The unassuming Mondo Rock, meanwhile, though finally really beginning to hit their straps as a live band after a slow start (which saw them chopping and changing membership and releasing a series of critically-rated but barely-charting singles) had not even released an album - although all that is about to change. (*How slow's three whole years? - ed*)

"We're kinda middle-rankers," Wilson puts it. "We're holding our own. We make enough to stay alive without getting into debt, which is saying something."

Certainly to keep the coffers level, Mondo Rock found it necessary to hit the road in between recording and mixing tracks or their forthcoming album *Primal Park* - even though one side of the debut was recorded live (mainly at Melbourne's Bombay Rock). Part of the difficulty was that two weeks of sessions in Sydney's EMI studios were scrapped when Wilson wasn't happy with the results - notably the vocal sound. "The Boss" is a meticulous producer who's rarely been satisfied with his end results, although, after a drawn out series of sessions which involved hopping from studio to studio all over the East coast, he finally seems to be with *Primal Park*.

The track list will probably be as follows: live side - *Toughen Up* (by Wilson); *Question Time* (by Gunther Gorman); *Livewire* (by Mondo bassist Simon Gyllies); *Down Down Down* (Wilson); *The Rebel* (Tony Slavich/Wilson). On the studio side - *Tell Me* (by drummer Iain McLennan); *Love Shock* (by guitarist Peter Laffy and Wilson); *Primal Park* (by Melbourne writer David Pepperell, who also co-wrote Norman Gunston's *I Might Be a Punk But I Love You Baby*, and Wilson); *Down To Earth* (Kim Fowley/Wilson); *I Wanna Be Loved* (Wilson); and *Searchin' For My Baby* (Wilson).

Searchin' For My Baby, a classically simplistic and catchy AM-style set-closer, is out now as Mondo's first single from the set, and if it isn't picked up by radio programmers immediately, the prejudice against performers who've been around for a few years will be evident. To my ears, it sounds just great...One of the most listen-to-it-once-and-you-*know*-it's-gonna-be-a-hit singles any Australian has released over the last year.

One of the main factors involved in the ease with which Mondo Rock pulls out great sets in venue after venue these days is the stabilization of the line up. Keyboardist Tony Slavich came and went from the line-up twice - but the stock two-guitar-rock-band format suits the fluidity of Mondo Rock best. Randy Bulpin (slide and rhythm) and Peter Laffy (lead) were filched from Ray Arnott's One Nite Stand way back in the early days, and although their styles are different, they mesh like a good set of gears. Laffy's reckless extroversion also clicks with Wilson's aggressive acrobatics onstage, giving the band a special high-spirited flavour. Drummer Iain McLennan, who also sings a good line in tortured white soul vocals, earns a lot of respect for his lively work on the kit. Complementing a uniquely rock-reggae style of rhythm section is Simon Gyllies who, as the most recent addition, has been with Mondo for almost two years.

There's a lot of colour in the all-original set they play. It defies being shuffled into any drawer, be it Pop, Reggae, Rock, Soul, whatever. But it has its stamp, and it's strong.

Anna Keys

Voudouris serenades female RAM-person

"I don't remember most of the session work I've done; why should I? I was too busy concentrating on my own career. You can't spread yourself thin like that, you make your mind up - do you want to be a session player or a star?"

Roger Voudouris has put down his guitar long enough to tell me a few words about himself.

"I've always known I'm going to be a star - that's inevitable. I've known since elementary school.

"I don't think I'm quite a star yet - *you're* not flipping out or acting crazy. In a few years from now, there will be those who won't know how to look me in the eyes, because they won't be able to believe they are standing next to me."

Voudouris is sitting in the Presidential Suite, no less, in one of Sydney's top hotels. Things haven't been going so well. It's 3.30 (p.m.) and he's still waiting for his avocado lunch to arrive. Record reps are buzzing around the room, grabbing for the nearest of several phones which ring every other moment. And wherever he goes, that damn band The Knack keep materialising and *upstaging* him. They stay in the same hotels, even appeared on *Countdown* with him. The Knack are the current darlings of the Top 40 *and* they're taller than him (Ii'l Rog being a surprisingly non-tall type).

A couple of weeks ago, the 24-year-old singer/guitarist hopped on an aeroplane and travelled out of America for the first time in his life. His mission - a two week promotional tour of Australia.

Voudouris is yet another part of the flotsam and jetsam of new artists who float up the charts each year. Some sink back immediately into obscurity; others continue to gain stature and build a name for themselves. His claim to fame in Australia boils down to a wind machine blowing through his auburn locks, a red Gucci jumper and a catchy little tune called *Get Used To It*.

The single reached no. 5 in eight weeks and the film clip had thorough exposure on local TV shows.

"The only image I have in Australia, which I can't understand why, is poppy, teenybopper.

"I have lots of bags. Y'see, I started pretty young, so I got my foot in a lot of funny doors. I made a folk album in the early seventies, then another that was jazz rock with a couple of ballads in it."

Apart from session work and his own recording, Voudouris has also played support to Lou Rawls, Mose Allison, Jesse Colin Young, and more recently, The Doobie Bros, with whom he shares manager Bruce Cohn.

The success of his single and latest album, *Radio Dream*, has finally brought him a share of the limelight. In America, he's headlining his own 3,000 seater concerts; obviously, he's grabbing hold of that limelight and squeezing it tight. If Australia doesn't seem that interested, he'll *make them* know, goddamn it, they are dealing with A Star.

His eyes lock aggressively with mine as he demonstrates his guitar playing prowess with a few flashy fandangoes on his Gibson.

"I have a lot of power over people. I know them, I know them from just looking in their eyes. I know how to make people comfortable or uncomfortable. I don't use it as a defense, I use it as an animal instinct." (*The banana truck'll be along soon, Roger - ed.*)

The eyes wander to my left tit as he explains the inspiration for the title track of his album: how he'd asked this girl out, but she went to see a band instead, explaining that even if he was going to be big in the future, he wasn't her *radio dream* yet.

Then he admires my shoes, my jumper, my eyes and my jeans and sings me an impromptu serenade on the spot.

But he ain't my radio dream either. The interview's over and I leave. I feel his powerful eyes explore the motion of my backside as I walk out. And I feel overpowered in no way whatsoever.

Miranda Brown

The Aliens Strangers find their own land

The go-go girls who used to dance in neon birdcages are probably settled down and married now, but the bare cage is still lit up and flashes obscenely.

The Pitt St. Gardens, the pagoda of psychedelia (or to some, just the Pitts), has ceased to cater for dressed up disco dancers and opened its doors to the rock clientele, a less excessive, far more drab assemblage.

Nowadays the illuminated wrought iron barriers that fringe the numerous staircases look fragile and antiquated. The only image they inspire is disaster - one night, too many of the drunken clientele will crane their bodies towards the stage and crash through the railing onto the dance floor. The whole mad, outdated extravaganza is like a scene from *Barbarella*; the band fits right into the scenery.

The Aliens are glitter circa '79. That doesn't mean gold and silver lame; in these more conservative times it's cheap plastic and sci-fi. They do have outfits - "uniforms", they call them - black shirts, white ties and short businessmen's haircuts. The uniforms are not bright in themselves, but they serve as a visual link between four outrageously different characters.

The lead guitarist is the first to catch the eye. Balding, with huge pop eyes, he stares dementedly and mimes actions, plucking imaginary strings from the air and real ones lower down.

Centre stage is a tall personage with a suave 'Clutch Cargo' jaw line and a ridiculous pair of red plastic rimmed 'mirrors'. He sings like a sixties pop star, opening his mouth and belting out the vocals with a strong, straight delivery.

Then there's this odd bod on guitar who wears a perpetual Stranger In A Strange Land expression as he wanders vaguely around the stage.

Even the drummer is an exhibitionist. Every so often, the audience catches glimpses of Rob Grosser jumping up from behind his drum kit, wild eyed and open mouthed.

Although the whole production seems chaotic, the music is well ordered and tightly executed in several different manners. Guitars and vocals swing into catchy hooks, the songs are perfect pop radio. Then there's lengthier constructions like *Liquid Love* and *Dr. Jekyll*, building and falling, magnetising the audience. In presentation and song material the band is colourful and cocky.

It was this attitude which first raised the hackles of Melbourne punks.

Greg Webster (lead guitar), Geoffrey Stapleton (guitar) and Danny Johnson have known each other for seven years now, harking back to the times they used to "knock around together" in hometown Adelaide. Danny Johnson was playing around Adelaide night clubs as half of an acoustic duo, but when he felt the songs he was writing needed a band, he formed Riff Raff with his three friends plus Rob Grosser. The group had a strong cult following before they disbanded in '77. The next year Johnson and Stapleton, who'd been writing together since the Riff Raff days, moved to Melbourne and formed The Aliens as a five piece band with keyboards. Three of the members left individually and were replaced by Grosser and Webster. It was the original Riff Raff line up, but a whole new, more consolidated band, individual enough to ensure "reactionary reactions" wherever they played.

As The Aliens were born, Melbourne was exploding with a small but intense punk uprising. The raw new wave/old guard war was raging and The Aliens didn't fit into either category.

"We were definitely the cool band to hate for a while. The punks hated us, the MORs hated us, *everybody* loved to hate us. The punks felt that way because we weren't punk and the middle of the road thought we *were* punk. It was good; it worked well for us because we always work best when people are reacting strongly."

Flak was also flying from the Feminist movement; they objected to the sexism of lyrics in songs like *Got To Follow That Girl*:

"Big girls small girls
Anything at all girls
Black chicks, beatniks,
Mutants and misfits
Rich chicks, bitch chicks
Even dig The Kitsch chicks..."

Since those times, things have cooled down somewhat and The Aliens have an enthusiastic following (particularly in Melbourne). Even the Feminists forgave them when they "realised the lyrics were tongue in cheek and got into the music anyway."

Now the band is touring the country with Sports; some nights they draw a response to equal the headliners'. Compared to Sports, The Aliens are pleasantly obnoxious, a combination of Skyhooks smart-arse and Angels regimentation - with a stronghold of good songs.

With an offer from Virgin Records in the air and other record companies sniffing and circling, The Aliens signed to Mushroom on June 25 this year.

In the odd hour they can steal from the Sydney leg of the Sportacus tour, the band has been racing over to Trafalgar Studios, laying down four tracks (with producer Charles Fischer) for their debut single.

The B-side will be *Boys In Black* and the A-side will be selected from three possibles: *Follow That Girl*, *Confrontation* and *You're So Young*.

Smart-arse good fun has returned.

Miranda Brown

"I've been in bars before, but this is ridiculous..." (pic Adrian Boot/LFI)

JOE JACKSON

Don't believe in Elvis Costello

Don't believe in radio

Don't believe in Image

Don't believe in gold records

Don't believe in Billboard

Don't believe in critics

Don't believe in "Is She Really Going Out With Him?"

Just believe in Joe.

And why not?

Mark Ellen explores an angry young man who's perfectly in control.

The man out in front is anything but slick. With his gangling frame - bull-neck cricking, back arched, his face creased into all manner of strange contortions - Joe Jackson comes close to being the very antithesis of a rock'n'roll star.

He's the first to admit it, and he plays up to it accordingly. He comes over aggressive while stumbling on his own endearing gracelessness. Joe's quick to affirm the band's newly-gained status. His feelings are mixed - partly enthusiasm about his increasingly golden future partly blank sarcasm about his unrecognised past. One moment it's a modest admission of success. Next it's a contemptuous slagging of the fickle British radio stations who are currently embracing his re-released single *Is She Really Going Out With Him?* with sudden and sycophantic praise. When it first came out eight months ago, they were just as swift to give it the corporate boot. "This year's model," adds Joe. That's ME."

Joe is lounging around the A&M press office in unusually expansive form. The times we'd met before, he was always voluble but tended to be guarded and suspicious when press or record magnates flashed their 'official' calling cards.

We sift throug recent events; they spell the kind of story that you don't get to hear very often. In March, spurred on by the success in the States of his labelmates The Police, A&M decided to follow with Joe Jackson. They launched him on a 42 date tour over a mere seven weeks, and backed it up with the usual amount of promotional muscle. But by the time the *Look Sharp!* album found its way onto a few radio turntables, it started selling itself across the national airwaves at something of an epidemic pace.

It was the kind of instant reaction that neither Joe nor A&M had ever imagined.

In England, after years of trailing the circuit in various despairing outfits, Joe was only just beginning to reap his rewards. Despite some favourable reviews, his three singles - *Is She Really Going Out With Him?, Sunday Papers* and *One More Time* - had respectively "done nothing", "crept into the top 100", and "bombed totally". Around the time the rock press were rolling out the red carpet for his debut album, a few articles in the nationals were sowing the seeds of mass-media acceptance.

There was a definite buzz, but not a lot else.

Mid-March, Joe set foot in New York City for the first time in his life. He found he was some kind of hero. His much-maligned pin-striped threads got him recognised on the streets. He was stopped for autographs. He was championed by total strangers. He packed out four shows at The Bottom Line.

New York loved him. He was hip.

To spread a little Anglo sartorial chic, A&M organised a *Look Sharp!* contest at The National Student Broadcasting Convention. It wasn't - as reported in the English press - a lookalike contest - the hapless contestants merely had to dress up in their flashest gear and mime along to a track off the album. The winner got 200 bucks, Joe got to judge, and the show got sufficiently out of order.

"The guy who won it was really funny," recalls Joe. "He mimed to *Got The Time* and he got all the words right, which is something I can't do myself half the time. He was wearing a flower in his button-hole and halfway through the song he ate it, and just started going crazy and leaping about the room."

Strip away the glossy surface layer of this apparent overnite sensation, and Joe's American success can be traced back to the foresight of one man - David Kershenbaum. It was Kershenbaum who originally alerted A&M's attention to Joe's demo tapes after they'd been turned down by United Artist, and he later produced the album *Look Sharp!*. It was Kershenbaum who instantly recognised the potential of Joe's conventional R 'n' B fashionable British New Wave as an accessible mix for the American radio market.

Joe is understandably disparaging about discussing his music in such clear-cut commercial terms.

"It's just that there was a real interest in British New Wave over there, but a reluctance to accept the more political aspects of it.

"It's like a lot of people seem to think that I sat down with a sliderule or something and *invented* this form of music which would fill the existing gap in the American airwaves, that would be the acceptable face of New Wave . . . blah blah. It just never occured to me when I wrote all the songs on that album. I'd never *been* to America, I didn't *know* what they wanted to hear, so there's nothing calculated about it.

The fact that his success in the States was predicted so accurately by the British press leaves him totally unmoved.

"It doesn't really matter to me what people say. If they say 'Joe Jackson's going to be successful', I say 'thanks very much', and if they say 'I don't think Joe Jackson will be successful,' I think - well fuck you. I'm quite surprised at the amount of success I've had in the States, but because it's America and it's however many thousands of miles away, it doesn't mean an awful lot to me."

Why not? Just because it's hard to gauge that perspective?

"Yeah, it's just a bit much to take in - I mean a *gold* record, which is what we almost have. While we were there, there was too much going on for me to really be able to think about what was happening. And since we've been back, I keep getting phone calls saying the album's up to No. 20 in *Billboard* or something, but I still don't really know what to think of it.

"I don't have any particularly strong ideas as to the comparative success or otherwise of the British bands over here. I mean, I can understand why our stuff is more successful than, say, The Clash, simply because the things they're talking about in their songs are not particularly relevant to the majority of Americans.

"I just think that my stuff is more accessible and more international. That's all I can say about it.

"Basically, I write music, and if people like it then *great*. It doesn't particularly bother me whether they're Americans or they're English. Obviously, this is my country, this is where I live, and I probably prefer to be here than anywhere else. I feel more at home performing to an English audience.

"But when you go to America and the album sells ten times as much in New York *alone* as what it sells in the whole of the UK, then you have a sort of . . . I don't know if the word is 'responsibility', to the people out there - because there's obviously a much greater demand there.

"Then you come back and people are saying you've gone to the States and 'sold out', and they don't even know what they're talking about. It's pathetic. It's either stupidity or terminal trendiness."

So you never made any compromises?

"I refused to compromise. I just went my own way, and did what I wanted to do, and said 'right, this is it - take it or leave it,' and all of a sudden it was a big success, so people say, 'you know Joe Jackson has gone gold on his first album within months of appearing on the scene. He's huge in the States - what a cunt *he* is'."

Was it a case of English audiences needing the reassurance that you'd made it in the States in order to get you established over here?

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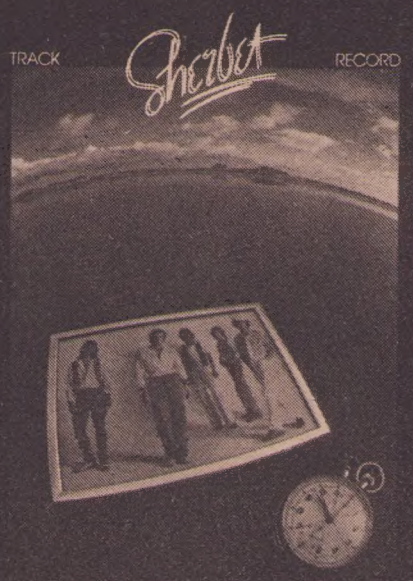

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"The audience don't need that reassurance. I think probably the radio stations do. It's so pathetic, all this playlist crap. When that single first came out, no one wanted to play it, no one wanted to know. Now that it's been a hit in the States, they're all playing it and saying they knew it was a great single all along. It makes me sick. It's just so typical of the small-mindedness of radio everywhere. Radio stations should play everything they possibly can, and let people choose what they want.

"A lot of comment was made about the album being a sort of retread of Elvis Costello's I've - been - hurt - in - love - and - I'm - screwed - up thing, which is not what I intended at all when I did it. Even the more perceptive people were saying the same thing. That made me think - 'Shit, for some reason these people are just not latching onto what I'm saying, so - fuck it - I won't write songs like that anymore.'

"That's one reason why the next album doesn't have any songs that are remotely like *Is She Really Going Out With Him?, Pretty Girls* or *Fools In Love.*

"A lot of people said Joe Jackson's album is all about being a loser, a disillusioned romantic, and all that sort of crap - which it wasn't at all. Over half the songs had nothing to do with that. Songs like *Instant Mash* and *Sunday Papers* were satires, and not one pointed to the fact that I was being satirical."

Maybe it's because those 'romantic' songs are a lot stronger and so made more of an impression.

"I don't know why it is. There's obviously got to be some reason for it."

I don't personally think you come anywhere near Costello's contrived hostility.

"Right, but people seem to reckon I'm like him but not as bitter and angry, and more of a nice bloke - you know wht I mean? I even saw in a rock crossword that one of the clues was something like *This man looks sharp, but is he playing Donovan to Costello's Dylan?* It was me. I felt very insulted by that. I don't know how much longer I'm going to stick with this fucking Costello thing. I feel like banging me head against a lamp-post."

Are you making any deliberate moves to get away from it?

"In some ways, yeah, but the fact that I'm writing about different things on the next album is equally because I don't want to write about the same things."

Joe Jackson's songs paint shrewd, detailed, very direct pictures. They're observations confined to what immediately affects him - people and attitudes, love and fashion - and they're dealt with by a man whose main motivation is to cut the crap and get back down to basics. He's unpretentious - exaggeratedly so.

All his songs are generated by strong feelings. They're honest (to the point of being self-deflating), they're ironic, sarcastic, disparaging and flippant. They're sometimes very funny, and sometimes depressing, but they have a habit of touching on a sensitive nerve nearly every time. Just occasionally, all these emotions get confused, which leaves him at the mercy of some wild misconceptions. I, for one, read self-repression between some of his lines.

"Not at all, no. In actual fact, I think it's quite the opposite. I'm not trying to sound inadequate or repressed in my songs. I'm trying to sound positive. A lot of the songs on that first album got misinterpreted. Like *Happy Loving Couples* which people thought was a song about me saying, you know, 'my friend's got a girlfriend, and I haven't, and I'm jealous.' It's nothing to do with that."

Isn't *Pretty Girls* about trying to switch off male libido?

"That's a silly song. It was very glib, very lighweight, and very disposable. Well, it was supposed to be funny, but having written it over a year ago, I don't wanna know about it anymore."

Do you ever regret any of the songs you've written? Do they ever embarrass you?

"No, nothing I've done ever embarrasses me. I just want to write about something different now, that's all."

So what kind of ideas are you writing about on the new album?

"*I'm The Man* is about trends and fads and the way people snap them up every time they come along, but it's very tongue-in-cheek. It's about things like yo-yo's and hoola-hoops and kung fu and *Jaws*. I had this idea that they were all the work of one person. You can imagine him looking at a graph on his wall and saying 'this is the next trend - pork pie hats'. And next week, you find everyone's got pork pie hats, and this guy's just sitting behind his desk and pissing himself laughing.

"In *Geraldine And John* I actually wrote a story that starts off with with picture of this very ordinary couple who are incredibly happy together, and everything is just *peachy*. Then you find out a little later in the song that they're actually married to other people. It progresses to the point where it gets a bit tense, and then it just falls to pieces. In the end, the guy gets beaten up by the girl's brother. It's pretty weird stuff," he adds, laughing.

"It's amazing the way people can stay 'happily' married for years, when they're not really. It's almost an accepted thing that in order to stay sane you have to have an affair with someone else, which makes the whole idea of marriage a joke in the first place.

"*On Your Radio* is a revenge type song. It's for all the people who said I'd never get anywhere, who said I was a complete wanker. Well I've done it, and you're gonna hear me on your radio."

Did a lot of people used to put you down?

"When I was a kid in my teens, and when I was at school, everyone thought I'd never amount to much. I'm not saying I've achieved anything amazing now, but at least I've got to the point where I'm earning enough money by doing what I want to do. I've struggled for years just to try and do my own music, and earn some sort of recognition, and I do feel some sense of triumph.

"I think back on a lot of things I went through in the past, and they seem really insignificant now. Things like when you have to try and earn some money, and you do jobs that are just slave labour. You go to some employment agency and they say 'Are you skilled?' And you say, 'Yeah, I'm a musician.' And they'd say, 'No, but are you *skilled?*' and they'd write down 'unskilled'. It's just that I'm-a-social-outcast-I'm-a-musician attitude.

"That's the sort of thing I feel I've overcome now, and I'd like to think that other people listening to that song who maybe haven't achieved anything like what I've done, will feel some sort of - maybe it's presumptuous to say it - some sort of inspiration from it."

Do you every feel self-pitiful?

"No, I don't think so at all. What have I got to feel self-pitiful about? I've felt hard done by, but there's certainly no point in moaning about it - or writing a song about it.

"My songs have a greater significance than just my own personal happiness or unhappiness.

"Take *Amateur Hour*. For me it's like no longer can I totally indulge myself musically because I have a huge audience watching whatever I do. I've got to accept the fact that there's always someone out there who's going to knock me whatever I do. There's a line in it that says *'Just miss one line, fall over, and you'll be left for dead.'* That's my angle on it.

"Also I did a song on the album which is very important called *I Don't Wanna Be Like That*. That's all about refusing to play the typecast role of 'the star'.

"I feel the reason I've sold a lot of records is because people think they're good, right? Not because I'm gorgeous and I've got a big cock. I should think that I'm probably a very unglamorous person. I should think that on stage I'm very shambling and nervous, and a lot of things that a rock star shouldn't be."

That is true.

"Well I think that's alright, 'cos I want to be a real person. I don't want to do what's expected of me."

What is expected of you?

"In the States, they have an idea of people coming over from London - new wave-type bands - as being real rebels, really aggressive and all that. They were expecting me to be mean and moody and to walk out of interviews halfway, because that's the image they've got of the English new wave bands. The fact that I'm willing to be reasonable with people seemed to quite surprise them.

"There are various options you can go for. You can be a working-class hero like Jimmy Pursey, or you can be a Mick Jagger or a David Bowie. And when you get to that stage when you are 'a star' - when you've sold a gold record or whatever - people sort of expect you to move in certain circles, and I just don't want to know about that.

"I'd rather go down the pub jn Camberwell where I've been going for years."

When I first met you six months back - when things were just starting to take off - you said those exact words. If anything, you just sound more emphatic.

"It's very easy to get paranoid about it. I don't think I am because, unlike a lot of people who find what appears to be fairly rapid success, I've been doing it for years.

"Basically, I've had enough time to sort myself out."

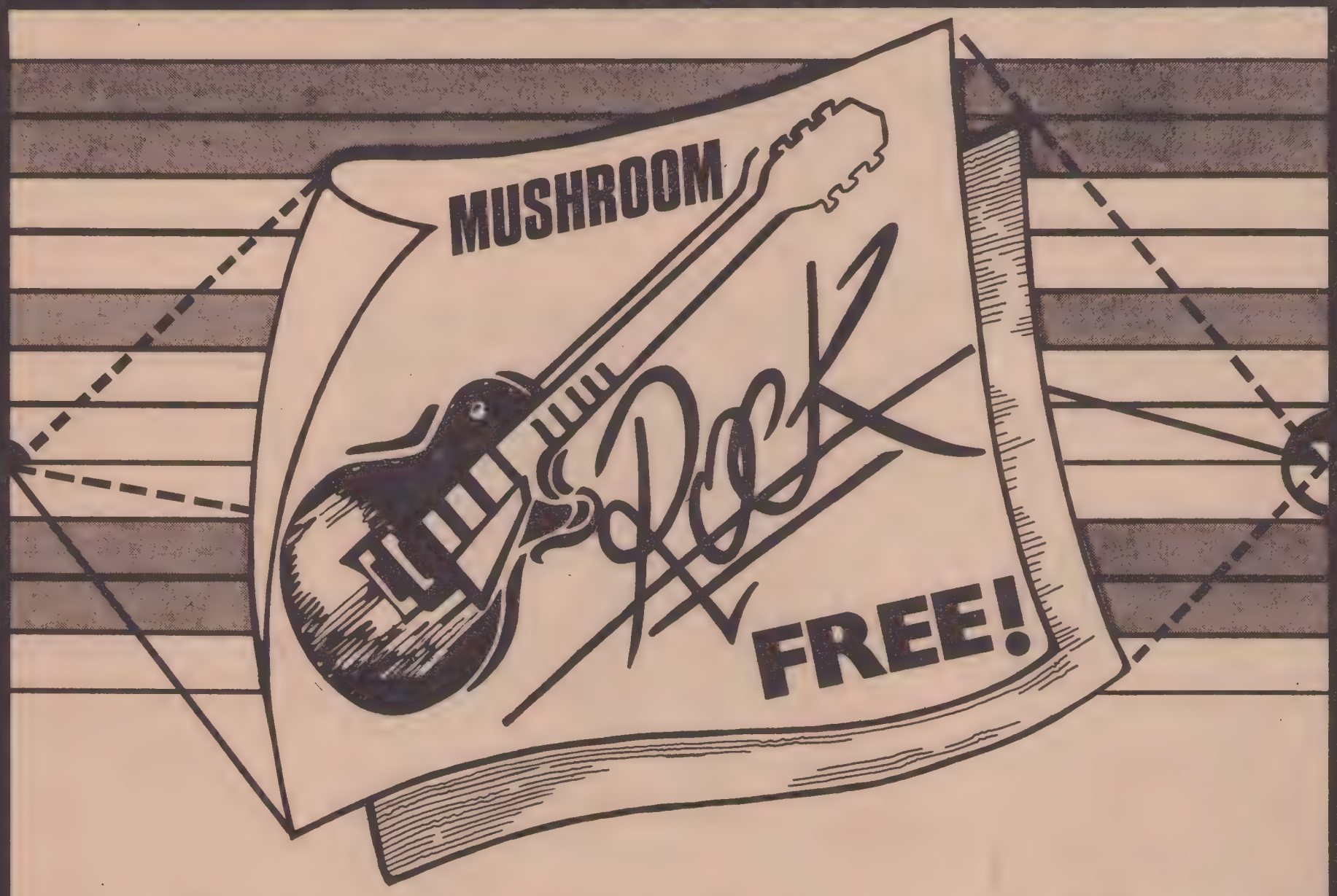
Joe Jackson's getting famous fast. He's going through the music biz mangle with both feet on the accelerator.

For someone who hates stereotypes with a vengeance, he's getting a lot of pressure from all sides to slide into that mould himself. In some ways he already has, but only to the extent that keeps the rest of him in check.

Fundamentally, he's a musician, and a musician of enormous talent. He's prolific, observant, receptive and deservedly self-confident. He's got what it takes to keep moving upwards.

He also has one other prime asset - he's got his act under control. Very much under control at that.

2SM & GENERAL PANTS
PRESENTS



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CONCERT 1

Capitol Theatre

SUN 9TH SEPT
CONCERT 2

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WILD TIGER

Reputed sullen beast turns out to be a cuddly pussycat. by David Withers.

Elusive guy, Richard Clapton.

You ring to arrange an interview and neither his promoter, publicist nor record company know where he is, despite the fact that he's continually touring at the moment.

And even when he *is* in town, it seems that within a week he's high-tailed it interstate before contact can be made. Preceded by a reputation for being unco-operative and even downright arrogant (least that's what I'd heard), it all seemed par for the course for the footloose R.C.

Finally cornered, it transpires that Clapton is only too happy to do an interview once he's checked you out personally. It's just that on his return from the States in May, he was forced through an extensive series of interviews with the straight media, an experience that left a bad taste in his mouth and a desire to resist any more press.

"I suppose I give the impression that I'm evasive about interviews but it's just like, I've been around for seven years and you can only tell the same story so many times. People want to go back to *Prussian Blue* and *Girls On The Avenue*, and it just becomes the same hackneyed story.

"Also, I don't think it gives you the chance to create any sort of vibe about yourself when you're so exposed and accessible all the time. I think it makes you more interesting if you're not being read in newspapers all the time."

Clapton certainly hasn't had much trouble keeping his own mystique intact over the years - he's probably the closest thing the local rock scene has to a genuine enigma. Short and paunchy, he's the least likely looking rock star imaginable. And consider: an English-born singer-songwriter who came to Australia but got most of his inspiration from periodic trips to Berlin; who recently hit a peak with an album called *Goodbye Tiger* and then promptly disappeared for more than a year. Now that's what I call a *strange* way to conduct a career in music in Australia....

But tales of arrogance go right out the window on first meeting. These days, at least, he's personable to the degree of infectious friendliness. The chubby face is almost constantly grinning.

Clapton left Australia last year and flew to Berlin with girlfriend and back-up singer Di McLennan. He "bummed" around Switzerland and the south of France, travelled to England and then moved into Berlin for a couple of months with every intention of recording at the Hansa studio, favourite of David Bowie and located by the famed Berlin Wall.

But the studio didn't feel right, so he flew to Los Angeles and settled there for 11 months, eventually recording *Hearts On The Nightline* with producer Dallas Smith and a bunch of (excuse the cliche) seasoned LA sessioneers.

On his return, Clapton seemed to have changed quite markedly. His hair was shorter and groomed, and his album was an uncharacteristically slick piece of streamlined LA rock'n'roll. Or so it seemed. Some people, me included, didn't take to it much. And although Clapton points out that none of the songs were written in or about Los Angeles, he agrees that *Hearts* is dominated by the influence of Smith and keyboard player Bill Cuomo.

"See, I decided if I was going to make an album in LA, it seemed a futile exercise if I wasn't going to make the most of it.

"I think that Richard Batchens (*his Australian producer for several years)* and I had both reached a peak after *Goodbye Tiger*, and we didn't know quite where to go from there. So the only thing to do was break off completely and say to Dallas and Bill, 'Here are the songs on acoustic guitar - they're yours."

The results are there to be heard, an album where the lyrics take second place to the music as the core of things.

"To be quite honest, I don't think that album is 100% the kind of music I like personally, but I was really happy with it because I think it was necessary for me to do that. I'd done six albums over seven years and they'd become so stylised it was just a bit too...*much*, y'know? I think if it hadda been 1979 and just one more Richard Clapton album, it could have been a little too tedious, really.

"And," he adds with a grin, "the reason it sounds so American is that I'm the only Australian on it - except for Renee." (*Geyer, who sang backing vocals on some of the LA sessions).*

Clapton actually tried out four producers before arriving at Smith - one of them being former Leon Russell sideman Don Preston, and another a jazz-fusion producer who had ideas to mate Richard's music with some of the best jazz/funk players he could find. Clapton rejected both.

He also rejected the Hansa studio because 'to be honest, I had a few reservations about that studio. It's really weird, because the engineer's room is above the studio, which is downstairs, and they do it by video.

"The console faces the Wall, which is only 50 feet away, and I think that's the reason Bowie digs it so much. He just sits there and stares at the Wall.

"That's all well and good," he laughs, "but I don't think I could handle recording an album by television."

With Germany rejected and interest coming from Los Angeles, Clapton moved there - but only after heavy persuasion. He'd been there less than two years before and found it "just so lacklustre. Last time I was away, I thought California sucked."

This time around he slipped more easily into the flow of things on the West Coast. He found musicians friendly and helpful, and business dealings - always an aspect of the Australian industry that he has been both suspicious and critical of - smoothly operating and hassle-free, once you found a decent lawyer and accountant. This, coupled with the fact that "there's nothing to do there except go to Disneyland," left plenty of time to feel creative.

Back home, people have reacted to *Hearts On The Nightline* in exactly the manner he expected they would - with shock. The man who created the ultimate Australian East Coast surfing album with *Goodbye Tiger* seems to have phased his listeners with this new style. At some gigs they've said to his face that they don't like it.

If anything, this new band, with keyboard player Bruce Haymes and American guitarist Chris Pennick, reinforces those dreaded LA connections. The loose vibe on stage is a contrast to the musical tension present in the Clapton band of 18 months ago, which included electric violinist Cleis Pearce and guitarist Kirk L'Orange. This band still jams, but less adventurously and often just a touch *too* laid-back for my liking. Pennick, for instance, seems typical of that school of players whose technique is enviable, but who give you the horrible feeling that they're just practising scales till that offer from Steely Dan comes along.

Clapton's alternatives for the future are threefold. He could stay here, but that would mean doing commercial projects just to eat. He is already considering offers to write soundtracks for a remake of the *Highway One* movie and for a Queensland television series called *Paradise Village*.

If he doesn't want to do that, he could go to Europe. But he's afraid he might have to change stylistically to get any sort of acceptance.

Or he could move to LA, where the music sucks but the scene and the musicians who have spawned it feel very comfortable. Still, it seems the obvious chance to broaden the horizons career-wise; and Clapton *is* a compulsive traveller who already has a bunch of songs written in LA ready for recording.

All too soon, we might be saying "Goodbye Tiger" once again.

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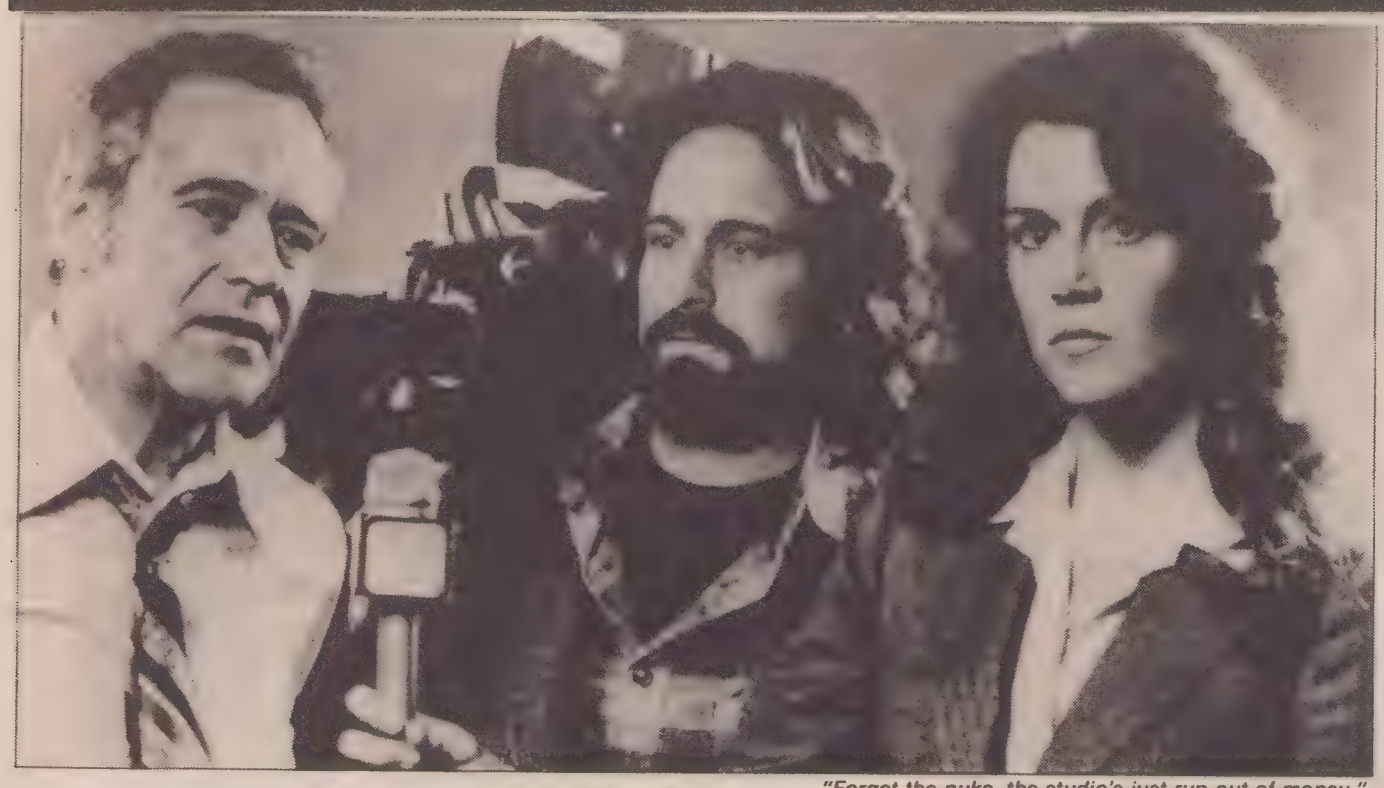
MOVIES



"Forget the nuke, the studio's just run out of money."

THE CHINA SYNDROME

Directed by James Bridges
Starring Jane Fonda, Jack Lemmon and Michael Douglas.

If your movie-going policy is a strict search for escapism, don't see *The China Syndrome*; its relentless realism is not what you want. Then again, there's little doubt it is what you need.

I find myself driven to such a hoary sweeping statement by the power of this film; it makes its own statements so clearly and completely, it leaves you stunned, speechless, steamrollered into acknowledgement with no room to add or quibble. Which is not to say there's no subtlety or skill involved - there is, in every direction. The subject, the terrible risk of nuclear accident involved in the growing use of nuclear power reactors, is most certainly not a fanciful one, as was proved by the emergency at Three Mile Island earlier this year only weeks after the American release of the film. Its impact at that time was already so powerful that officials issued press statements saying there was no risk of a China Syndrome happening there and then. (The China Syndrome, in the briefest of layman's terms, is when the water surrounding and controlling the reacting radioactive core rod drops and the reaction goes out of control; theorectically burning its way through the Earth to China. In reality, there would be a massive nuclear explosion).

The plot unfolds through the accidental witnessing of a dangerously close brush with just such an accident by a television news team touring a nuclear power plant. Jane Fonda is the intelligent, attractive woman reporter stuck with "soft news" stories - tiger's birthday parties, fluff-brained irrelevant stuff. Her performance is breathtaking; courageous, womanly and always believable, she never loses her grasp of how the situation's side-effects would work on a real-life reporter who loves her job too much to risk it lightly. Michael Douglas has a much wider margin as the independent camera man, hired for this particular job, who can call the TV station boss an asshole without much risk. Nevertheless, the urgency is so immediate, there's no time to question the instant passion of his commitment.

Jack Lemmon will never be just a funny actor again. He plays the boss of the reactor's control room, the man who has to handle the first near-disaster witnessed by the news team, and the only person to realise it is a *warning*. He tracks down a basic fault in the reactor's construction, a flaw that will lead to inevitable catastrophe; his discovery is met with money-minded indifference. No one will listen; investigations cost *money*. Under this enormous responsibility, he is forced out of complacency into drastic action, with a result that packs the last forty five minutes of the film with explosive tension. Lemmon's torn company man character takes the central concern out of the hands of bleeding heart liberals and places it amongst ordinary people - he becomes the single tragic victim of a situation where literally millions of people are the hideously actual potential victims.

The China Syndrome is not an hysterical anti-nuclear attack; no across-the-board blind rantings against the use of uranium as such. The workers in the plant are allowed a sideways kind of case for its use in a power consuming society. (In lines like "How does she think she'll use her hair-dryer?" - at a woman protestor). Its target is the inevitable risk of human error, or specifically, greed, as the cause of statistically inevitable accident. The climax, too detailed to explain here, has a dreadful logic inter-dependent on everything that's gone before it. There's no way it can be regarded as pure fiction; nevertheless it has more sheer nervous tension, cliff-hanging, chair-clutching fright than any purely fictional film I can remember seeing. James Bridges must be credited with maintaining this exhaustingly hair-trigger balance.

As the credits rolled across the screen, the audience was largely silent, with the exception of a lone voice nearby: "I wonder what *really* happens?" After Three Mile Island, *The China Syndrome* is all too terrifyingly close to a re-enactment of what has already *happened*.

Annie Burton

A WEDDING

Directed by Robert Altman
Starring Amy Stryker, Desi Arnez Jnr., Mia Farrow, Carol Burnett and Forty Four Others

Remember the girl/guy (delete where inappropriate) you picked up on that memorable night at the dingy inner city rock venue? Remember how you went home together and next morning, as the sun's first rays lit up his/her body with a rosy hue etc., you realised this was more than just another one night stand? And then before you knew it he/she became as much of a fixture as the furniture and began talking about "serious" commitment, "a lifetime's" friendship, "ceremonial bonding" of the relationship. If this scenario fits you then go and see Robert Altman's movie *A Wedding* for a true appreciation of the death trap staring you in the face.

This film is the most ruthless put-down of conventional romance and the marriage institution that has ever been captured on celluloid and within its wide-reaching scope you'll find much to gag and puke over. Apart from the patently superficial relationship between the bride and groom every relative attending the wedding displays some manifestation of corruption and hypocrisy. In fact you name your favourite socially unacceptable vice and I bet Altman didn't neglect to include it in his matrimonial magnum opus - incestuous overtones, alcoholism, latent lesbianism, double standards in sexual mores, carefully concealed junkie habits amongst the middle aged, hints at homosexuality, upper class elitism, white bigotry and a few more.

Obviously, the wedding is the vehicle for another of Altman's virulent blitzes on American mores and values. And that is the film's major problem: it takes on too many targets and comes perilously close to being a laborious pastiche not to mention a crashing bore.

We can enthusiastically endorse Altman's demystification of marriage and exposure of the pedantry and ostentation that twist this institution into a fake, meaningless ritual. But beyond this the film lacks subtlety in making its other major observations and you can get a bit restless while Altman is force-feeding you great chunky unpalatable gobs of social criticism and moralising perceptions. This indigestible fare is supposed to be rendered more agreeable by the funny situations that apparently abound in the film. Myself I thought Altman used some pretty corny contrivances to extract this humour. Pill-popping ladies acting outrageous while high, people talking to a bedridden relative without realising she's dead etc. are not really belly-aching laugh material. The humour is thin on the ground and the audience has to seize on every strained weak gag if they want to squeeze some jollies out of this movie.

What really holds this film together is the excellent acting. Amy Stryker is very convincing as the bride and big chance for wimp of the year, Muffin Brenner. Mia Farrow puts in a clever pretty-vacant performance as Muffin's slightly brain-haemorrhaged sister who's got the inter-related problems of never being able to say no and a pregnancy with fifteen potential fathers. Desi Arnaz Jnr. is so realistic as the slick, self interested superficial groom, Dino Corelli, that it seems an inescapable conclusion he's a natural for the part and not really acting. All in all, there's not a bad performance in the whole cast which is high praise considering there's forty eight character parts and Altman can thank his actors for maintaining the film's tenuous credibility.

O.K., so we know it's art but is it entertainment? The audience reaction in the theatre said it all. The person on my right fell noisily asleep about halfway through the movie, the young boisterous couples in front became progressively more subdued and finally walked out before the film was even half over. There was no uproarious laughter or delighted spontaneous applause etc., and as people filed out at the end they had the look of punch-drunk underdog fighters coming out for round fifteen rather than a thoughtful, stimulated audience. So the verdict from the masses seemed to be a thumbs down. As humorous, subtlely perceptive entertainment *A Wedding* is a bit limp, then again who's ever been to a wedding that was humorous and subtely perceptive entertainment? In the school of realism Altman gets full marks, but in the celluloid thrills department *A Wedding* doesn't rate.

Harry Kolotas

"Y'see honey, boys are sorta different to girls..."
Amy Stryker and Lauren Hutton.

NOW IT'S PREACHER BOB!

An exclusive pre-review of Bob Dylan's coming 'Christian' album from Rian Malan in Los Angeles

'Some brimstone baritone anticyclone rolling stone preacher from the East,' - Bruce Springsteen, from *Blinded By The Light.*

I guess Springsteen will be as surprised as the rest of us to discover that his words have come to describe so accurately the man in whose footsteps he wrote his finest songs.

It'd be unfair of me to discuss Dylan's forthcoming album, his first since his conversion to Christianity, without stating how matters stand between God and this writer. I'm an infidel, and this is a flagrantly Christian album. It smoulders with hellfire, and what's more, it preaches. But that's not what makes *Slow Train Coming* as saddening as an old lover's wedding. What hurts is that the man who taught us to rejoice in desolation, the man who found a forlorn glory in despair, has taken refuge in the most fundamental and conservative of religions.

I wonder whether the scathing asides about formal religion in Dylan's earlier work haunt him now he's a born-again Christian. Consider this one from *Blonde on Blonde*: *'Inside the museums, infinity goes up on trial/Voices echo this is what salvation must be like after a while.'* He once warned against preachers who 'speak with their tongues on fire, bent out of shape by society's pliers' - another line he must often have thrown in his face these days.

But times a-change, huh Bob? A vagrant tape of the completed *Slow Train Coming* circulated in Los Angeles reveals Dylan reincarnated as a painfully sincere man of God, a doctrinaire convert to evangelical Christianity. The intense young folk beatnik who surfaced in New York coffee houses in 1961 with a guitar, an affected Okie twang and a fanciful proletarian past has invented and reinvented himself so often in the past two decades it's hard to know when to take him seriously. The bomb-banning freedom rider dissolved into the rocking apocalyptic visionary of the *Highway 61* period. The sublime holy man of *John Wesley Harding* mutated into the down-home, pickin' and grinnin' country boy of *Nashville Skyline.* Then he soft-shoed his way through some blurry showbiz albums (*Dylan* and *Self Portrait*) before metamorphosing before our very eyes into the brooding cynic of *Blood On The Tracks, Planet Waves* and *Desire.* A blink of the eyes and he reappeared as the aging hipster, camping it up in mascara on the cover of *Hard Rain*; pursuing his waning street credibility through a slew of hard-rocking live albums and last year's *Street Legal.* But it seems the master illusionist, now 38, has finally dropped his mask and stands naked in the vacuum of our eyes.

Slow Train Coming is a work of devastating sincerity. Its strongest songs writhe with almost palpable torment. The new Dylan speaks straight from the heart, in austere, literal terms. And what he's saying will dismay those once inspired by his revolutionary humanism. For, along with Christianity, Dylan seems to have embraced a set of socio-political attitudes that place him squarely in middle America.

The album is laden with dogma, sodden with biblical references. The song titles document the holy rollin' territory they cover: *Change My Way, Precious Angel, Trouble In Mind, Serve Somebody, When He Returns, I Believe In You.* The opening

Hey Bob - heard the one about the rabbi, priest and evangelist who took this plane trip... (pic K.O'B.)

cut, *Do Right By Me,* is a direct descendant of *Street Legal*'s *No Time To Think*, in which Dylan pitted a series of philosophical abstractions against one another in a catechism of confusion: 'Socialism...Hypnotism... Materialism...Patriotism... Loneliness...Tenderness...' *Do Right By Me* is a similar litany of beliefs, but the conflicts are resolved. The song is built around the New Testament dictum, 'Do unto others,' which in fact acts as its chorus. *Man Gave Names* is an excursion into fundamentalism, a parable of the creation set to a sprightly reggae/calypso beat.

Dylan's vivid cinematic images have largely given way to the jargon of charismatic Christianity. On *Slow Train* he talks of 'abandoning earthly principles', of there being 'only one authority, the authority on high'. He talks of being led astray by fools, of being blinded, and ultimately of being saved by the man who died on the cross. The bible thumper's heaviest guns are brought to bear on a sinful world: 'Jesus said be ready, for you know not the hour which I come,' sings Dylan. 'He who's not for me is against me.' This cheerful thought is echoed later in *Precious Angel*: 'You either got faith or unbelief/ There ain't no mutual ground.'

Satan puts in several appearances too, whispering on one occasion; 'Well, I don't want to bore ya, but when you're through with miss so-and-so I've got another woman for ya.'

There are glimpses of the demons that drove Dylan into the arms of Christ, and many seem related to the saint and martyr role he was called on to play so often he came to believe it himself. 'Here comes Satan,' he says. 'He's gonna make you a law unto yourself... deaden your conscience 'till you worship the work of your own hands.' Fame has obviously palled for Dylan:

'You may be a rock'n'roller
Prancin' on the stage
Money and drugs at your command
Women in a cage
But you still have to serve somebody.'

And there are fragmentary allusions to deep unhappiness, such as this line, from *Change My Way*: 'So much depression, can't keep track of it no more.' From the album's title track: 'Sometimes, feel so low down and disgusted.' From *Trouble In Mind:* 'When the things that you don't count for zero, it's what's inside that counts, ask any war hero.'

Along the way, we're introduced to another of the women who drift through Dylan's work like wistful sirens and inspire his fiercest passion and deepest tenderness. The successor to Joan Baez, Suze Rotolo and Sara Dylan hasn't yet been identified by the gossip columnists, but she takes credit for his conversion. 'Precious Angel,' Dylan asks, 'how was I to know you'd be the one to show me I was blinded, to show me I was gone, how weak was the foundation...'

Strangely, the tone of the album is one of pain rather than joy. Not one of the eleven songs is transfigured by the ecstasy said to accompany Christian rebirth. There's nothing to equal the Zen exuberance of *New Morning's* 'So happy just to be alive, underneath this sky of blue', nothing to touch the ethereal, translucent spirituality that illumined *John Wesley Harding*, with its sermons buried in ballads and its mood of gentle admonition. Dylan may have been saved, but he still sounds as tormented as a self-flagellating Jesuit.

Christianity aside, *Slow Train* reveals a man groping towards tradition and conservatism. 'In the land of the brave, Jefferson is turning over in his grave' is perhaps the first sentiment of Dylan's the John Birch Society would subscribe to. The targets of his anger remain essentially the same - politicians, big business, government - but his anger seems Calvinist where it was once rooted in man's inhumanities to man.

'Counterfeit philosophy has polluted all your thoughts,' he snarls. 'Karl Marx has got you by the balls, Henry Kissinger has got you tied in knots.' Like Jesus in the temple, he flails at 'unrighteous doctors dealing drugs that will never cure your ills,' at 'adulterers in churches and pornography in schools, gangsters in power and lawbreakers making the rules'. Armed with the righteous anger of sectarian zealotry, he attacks the established churches too: 'But the enemy I see wears a cloak of decency/Non-believers and rent stealers talking in the name of religion.'

Sterling stuff, and not that far removed at face value from his anti-establishment diatribes of the past. But then a gem of right-wing rhetoric, like this one from the album's title track, makes you pause:

'All that foreign oil
Controlling American soil
Look around, it's just bound to make you embarrassed
Sheiks walking around like kings
Wearing jewels and precious things
Deciding America's future from Amsterdam and Paris.'

Dylan's new reactionary stance has a puritanical, rural flavour It's as though he's stepped into Andrew Wyeth's classical American gothic portrait of a farmer standing before a church - close to the soil, deeply religious, suspicious of authority and fearful of change. And that's the key. Once Dylan exulted in an order rapidly changing; on *Slow Train Coming*, he urges us to 'wake up/Strengthen the things that remain'. It's a change in emphasis. Where Dylan once saw poetry in the streets and saintliness in the broken souls that walked them, I think he now sees Sodom.

A generation once marched in time to Dylan's music, and many sixties survivors will see Dylan's conversion as a betrayal of their era's heady politico-narcotic ideology. Dylan seems already to have encountered this bitter reaction, and he refers to it in *I Believe In You,* the album's most touching song:

'They ask me how I feel
And if my love is real
And whether I can make it through
They look at me and frown
They'd like to drive me from this town
Because I believe in You.'

Compare the almost pitiful sincerity of those lines with the arrogance with which he brushed aside hostility towards one of his earlier metamorphoses: 'Dirt of gossip thrown in my face/Dust of rumours covers me/I'll make my stand and remain as I am/ And not give a damn.' The ragged clown seems at last to have taken off his make-up. He admits, with naked vulnerability, that he can no longer stay 'drunk on fear out in the wilderness'.

Dylan's conversion was predictable, even though his choice of doctrine wasn't. In much of his work he's floundered in spiritual torment, a rock star with a bible in one hand, a guitar in the other and a crazed metaphysical anguish in his eyes. His strongest images have sprung from the plagues and legends of the bible. He's always presented himself as a man in search of something elusive, and now that his quest has ended in the unremarkable embrace of Christiansity, his capacity to intrigue may be lost.

Dylan's sacrificed something else: his universality. His best songs were full of ellipses, great truths half grasped and sketched in bold metaphors. Part of his appeal was that he allowed us to flesh out his cryptic, fragmentary allusions with the small passions and anxieties of our own lives, and thus to make his songs our own. Where the tambourine man has led now, many of us cannot follow. Universality was the spark that ignited the thousands of matches held aloft at Dylan concerts; now, alas, they will flicker out.

When you're writing around Dylan, it's easy to forget that on one level at least it's only rock'n'roll. And as rock'n'roll, I like it. The best songs seethe with the dark turmoil of gospel. The album was produced with more care than *Street Legal*, its sophisticated veneer belying the hand of producer Jerry Wexler (Aretha Franklin, Etta James). The girlie chorus of *Street Legal* is once again in evidence but used more sparingly and tastefully and for the first time, Dylan uses a brass section. With the exception of one or two tired 12-bar blues rockers, the melodies are fresh, and Dylan's delivery reeks of conviction.

And then there's Mark Knopfler, the Dire Straits' guitarist, whose compatibility with Dylan is so seamless it's hard to tell where master leaves off and disciple begins. Both men come from a school of lean, underproduced rock in which intelligence and emotion take precedence over other elements, and their collaboration is so successful I would imagine Dylan considers it God-ordained. Knopfler's aching, bittersweet guitar pervades the album, a perfect foil for Dylan's melancholy melodies. *Slow Train*'s subdued, chooglin' boogie is uncannily like Dire Straits at times. Knopfler has been labelled a Dylan clone; this album reveals the relationship to be closer to one of mutual admiration.

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P S. This does not constitute a break up in the STRANGLERS.

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I'M IN LOVE AGAIN, THANK GOD

His bowels are in fine working order, but the thump of his great big heart kept Paul Morley awake at night.

THE IAN DURY INTERVIEW

In the fawn and too perfect room 111 of the Ramada Hotel, Ludwigshafen, West Germany, there's four people drinking, smoking, talking and listening. A window has been opened to let some real air in, outside a car or two will drone by occasionally, interrupting an exclusive sort of peace.

On the other side of the table, drinking a golden and frothy beer, his withered wiry legs pulled almost elegantly up around his trunk, as jerkily mobile in this position as a frisky monkey, is Ian Dury. He's doing most of the talking, his voice something like an expressive, creamy Tommy Cooper's, equally prone to explode into unexpected devouring laughter. Dark eyes, dominating with his hard working mouth and noble, leathery face, dart quickly and hopefully and water a little - perhaps from the sting of suspected conjunctivitis, perhaps from something behind his conversation. He appears to be both menacing and cuddly, disturbing and friendly.

It's early Thursday morning; Wednesday night's performance is two hours back in the memory and thanks to imbibing and inhaling Dury has long relaxed. His conversation is meandering, occasionally mystifying, but always indicative of his constant doubt.

"I think at last there's an equality of aim going around," Dury decides as three pairs of eyes train on him. "Art can be exciting 'cos it's real. Again. Maybe it's never been that before...I think now is the age that needs art. Now is the first time that art has ever been necessary...because the only way to break out is to break out with pride...and break out and feel that you're on a journey of some sort. And rock'n'roll is a massive part of that...it's easy and that makes it good, and it's attractive..."

He drifts a little, and remembers when he was eleven seeing a girl in a hospital bed next to his who had legs like a W. The little girl Shirley died. "But I don't think I was ever nasty to her," he whispers. He sobs, holds himself. My mind hums loudly, my mouth dries up.

He carries on. "Your defects really, looking at it positively, should make you better, cos they should make you compensate where you need to...it's not an umbrella that covers your life. It's not, nothing is. And that's why I really respect people who have obviously lost everything, yet still haven't lost everything. People who know they're going to die with the cancer. And quite often they live, because their spirit goes YEAH! well fuck it I'm gonna die...cos cancer, we don't actually understand it, but if it's not the spirit I'll be very amazed. Because I believe that cancer is of the spirit.

"But yeah," Dury shifts, "there are new currencies and there are so many secret societies in this world brought about through reasons of potential and through reasons of excitement too. If there is to be a shared knowledge then it's gonna happen anyway, there is no need for a messiah. And to be a rock'n'roller is to become immediately aware of the possibilities that someone...wants to climb through your window. Nothing more. Either with a kiss or with a shooter...or with a message from somebody or whatever.... and er I don't want....I'd rather be nervous in that respect...I just want to be an entertainer."

I remind Dury of something he said to me just a little while before: that the reason for his success was the obviousness of his ailments. Is this flippancy, Ian?

"No, don't call me flippant," he protests, grinning.

But in all the time that I have known of Ian Dury, through his struggle and his success, it has never occurred to me that his disability was a particularly influential force, either for or against him. You really can't think that's the reason for your success, Ian.

"I think that's really very likely," he frowns. "Somebody comes up to me - and this happens quite a lot - and they say, how much of that are you putting on?" Dury glances down at his crumpled legs that seem as tiny as a ten-year old's. "They say c'mon, how much of that is real, oi oi, c'mon. People come up to me and say OH! you're limping - you don't do that on stage.

"I try not to. A doctor I saw once, he said to me, I saw you on telly the other day, and you really do hide your polio well, and I said thank you. He said you're really good. I saw you walking in here and you're really cool. I said thanks. He sussed me: I try not to limp. I don't want to be seen as that. I'd rather hover. Like that." He holds his hands in mid-air, and we all laugh.

Suddenly, he veers off.

"I think that Noel Coward was a real clever bastard. I do really. Cos he was gentle and he had a sting, and the sting came afterwards and that's the way I like it."

Maybe that's what you've got, I offer.

"That's what I respect. I haven't got it yet. I'm trying but my sting's too strong at the moment. I'm not on a mission, just things that used to make me happy that aren't there anymore, that make anyone happy.

"It's easy for me to go out and be like a Walt Disney film, because I'd rather be that as an entertainer. I'd rather be insignificant in terms of anything except the passing of time. It makes me more of a human being in one way."

He stops short and sighs, a little unhappy. "There seems to be a responsibility though. What do they want me to do, Paul?" he pleads. "If they tell me then I'll check it out."

I sit there feeling a little dumb, and then remember the smiling faces at the two shows I've just seen. The people, you make them happy, I say, and there's no condescension or abuse. The people, they know you want to be their friend. I don't feel twee saying this in the quiet room 111.

"That's alright then," Dury smiles, and then fixes me with a quizzical stare. "Y'sure?" Yeah, I say with confidence.

"That's enough so far. I shouldn't try for anymore."

Ian decides he'd better crash out. It's been a long day. We all ease stiffly out of our sitting positions. I say goodbye to Ian, and give him a little hug. My fingers almost touch in a circle around his puny shoulder bone. I open the door to leave and turn round, Ian is hobbling towards me, his walk a soft effort, a strangely tidy mobility, a half smile on his large face. Nervously I smile back.

In my room I sob myself to sleep. Not out of pity or any of that crap. Just that....Ian Dury has a massive heart, and it thumps thumps thumps. Sometimes it thumps away so hard he falls over. Mostly it thumps away so that everyone can feel it. I spent two days close to his heart and it shook me.

I could be the catalyst that sparks the revolution
I could be an inmate in a long term institution
I could lead to wild extremes, I could do or die
I could yawn and be withdrawn and watch them gallop by
What a waste, what a waste...
Because I choose to play the fool in a seven piece band
First night nerves every one night stand
I should be so glad to be so inclined
What a waste, what a waste, ROCK'N'ROLL DON'T MIND!!
('What a Waste' by Ian Dury)

Wednesday, and the large Blockheads community, characters like you travelled through school with, are collected outside the Dusseldorf Intercontinental Hotel. They board their newly acquired luxury coach for the four hour drive to Ludwigshafen. Last night's Dusseldorf show was pleasing for the group, many new friends were made.

On the stationary coach, a plush beauty that you could live on for three months and not get bored with, the Blockheads family are disbelievingly watching a flickering video of *Deep Throat* whilst they wait for Ian Dury and his lady Zen. Sausages are peeled and spittle dribbles in full colour at the front of the coach, greeted with groans and tuts.

Let's see. There's happy Bombay-born Norman Watt-Roy, invisibly quiet Charlie Charles, a small smiler with a tummy ache Davey Payne, pretty John Turnbull with the lovely eyebrows, smart and affable Mickey Gallagher, the droll 'living juke box' Andy Dunkley who's DJ-ing on the tour and a couple of unidentifiables. And the main stars of the attraction...

Fred Rowe! Straight backed ex-army man who walked into Ian's flat one day and said he'd like to work for him.

Kozmo Vinyl! Fast talker, smart thinker, who's dyed his hair with vegetable dye so that when he sweats it stains his neck and forehead. Ian's press man and general guide.

Chaz Jankel! The Blockheads' cultured and academic musical director, who writes most of the music and arranges it all.

Ian Dury and Zen arrive, move up the middle of the coach through the Blockhead family and settle at the back of the coach. There it's possible for Ian to stretch his legs. Seats facing each other are joined with a padded section so that two persons can lie down quite comfortably.

The coach pulls away for Ludwigshafen. The sweaty flesh of the pornographic fairytale *Deep Throat* is soon replaced by a video of the first episode of the recent *Fawlty Towers* series: good humoured disgust replaced by honest belly laughs.

I move down the coach and sit next to Dury, we stretch our legs out, whizz backwards down smooth autobahns dissecting forest and town, and talk, a picture forming of A Life, backed with the Cleese-induced laughter of the Blockhead family.

You like people a hell of a lot, don't you?

"It seems to me that I rarely ever meet any that aren't smashing. And I do definitely approach it from the beginning to find the 'OKness' of it all and lots and lots of people do that, enough people show me that. I am only here as a result of all the people that I know, so everyone I meet I think right let's have some of that then! Cos it's going to do me good. And it does, always!

"There was a guy the other night, he was giving me good vibes cos he was saying you're working hard you guys and it's a pleasure to have you in my hall - what do you think of my hall? And we was going you have got a great hall!! And we're looking at his carpet. And in a way he helped to make our day. That made me feel great.

"I think togetherness is how you become creative, I don't think creativity comes out of one person. Mine doesn't. Mine comes from all the other people that, y'know, some give me information, some go like that, nudge my elbow, in the dark or in the daylight, and I'll do that to people if I'm feeling cool. I can do that to people so that they can do it to me. You've got mates, you can do that too. So having mates is where it's at, I reckon. Girls, boys anything."

Do people ever let you down?

"Ah no, no one's ever let me down."

Was it hard for you to assert yourself along the way?

"I didn't really think that I was doing something until I was doing something in music. Really ever since I was about 13 I've always wanted to be a musician, since I realised that music was terrific. I've wanted to be a musician ever since and I've never known how to do it. I've been thinking about it, how to be one. I'm beginning to be one now...

"So I want to start playing one-handed piano next year. I could use a roller with my left hand and a switch with my foot...."

Music made you feel happy?

"Yeah. It flooded my body."

And that's what you wanted to do for people ever since?

"Naaaah! No I used to be a real bastard eh! Fucking hell, man. I used to project really horrible unhappiness. Not that I was vicious...."

"I'm not a masochist, I'm not one of them. I used to worry about it a real lot that I was a bastard. Me and Nick Lowe were once having a cup of tea and that and he told me about him and me one night and I was totally drunk, and he said I was a total fucking bastard to him and I used my intelligence to do it with and therefore it made him really unhappy, cos he likes me and I like him and if that's one result of me growing up heavy, growing up tough, then....

"I said to him, OK, thanks for telling me. Thank God somebody would tell me that. It's like bad breath of the body or of the mind. It's not a thing that is necesarily done on purpose."

So maybe it is your intention to share happiness with other people.

"I'm a latterday hippy. I wasn't a hippy in the late '60s. I was a labourer style person, overcoat, rolled up straight leg Levis, put a lot of bleach on them. I had a style that was very organic.

"For me it's all wound up in the way you think, clothing. That white shirt - Zen's wearing it just makes me think of....I love it! I mean, it's the best garment on the bus today. HA! HA! HA! I do really. It's nothing to do with what's happening or anything like that, it's just it'll always be smashing.

You've sort of admitted that you do try to bring happiness through your music.

"Not try!"

You do!

"My mum came to a gig earlier this year and she always wanted me to be a lawyer. And she came into the dressing room and she said they're all happy, and I said - good. That's enough, innit? And she said yeah they're all happy, and I said - good. That's enough innit? And she said yeah, and she didn't want me to be a lawyer anymore. She accepted what I was doing.

"I was alright. I was 35. It's quite a nice time to be accepted by your mummy. Before I caught polio I was a sort of clever kid. I was six, and I'd decided that school wasn't a particularly terrific idea, so I decided not to go anymore. And then I had to go and see a child psychiatrist and it was said that I was the product of a broken home and I should go to a school with potential for the brain of some sort and then I caught polio, thank God - I thank God in terms of that I avoided going to some school where they all go, cluck cluck cluck come on Yehudi!

"Who needs that? Cos your emotional development is retarded immediately. You're put into a mental hot house atmosphere. I was in a normal physical world straight away, getting my head punched in as soon as I could walk, things like that, and punching a few heads as well. But I was nine, like, and if you had a fight with a geezer with two leg irons on you had to sit next to him. And there'd be two heavy bastards walking up to you on crutches and they'd let go of their crutches and fall on top of you and you'd be lying on the floor and they're on top of you and there's about half a hundredweight of metal on each leg and they're punching the shit out of your nose...So I learnt to put the boot in... mostly pathetic fights.

"But that was for three years, and it seemed I was in a kind of a physical jungle of equality with a load of bleeding so-called disabled people - which was a very normal world of accepting everyone in a mental way, cos there was a load of so-called jubblies. So-called....

"I went through a lot of things that now I would regard as horrendous, but while they were happening I wasn't regarding them as horrendous. I was a kid. I was aware of myself as any child is aware of himself.

"I mean it's like a comedian tells a hundred jokes and maybe he'll get one good joke out of telling his mates a hundred - and his mates are his mates for that reason. Presumably they don't mind. They help him out, y'know.

"So to me, talking is....I have to trust you - as much as I trust the geezer I'm buying my packet of cigarettes from. That's all. That's enough, isn't it? I don't mind if I appear to be a lemon, but I don't want to believe that I *am* a lemon cos I don't think I could get up in the mornings if I felt that. I've been getting up early in the morning very easy now for eight years."

What kind of doubts do you have?

"I'm very scared of going... going horrible. Getting too prima donnary. Cos you do prima donna youself to get a gig together, you psyche yourself up before a gig. And you say HURRY UP! and things like that. 'Please hurry up with that!'

Do you consider yourself a knowledgeable man?

"No. I consider myself a barrack room lawyer of the lowest stripe, I don't want to be the lowest. No, my opinions are no more valid than yours and my knowledge is no more wide. I just can bring out my words and you can bring out yours as interesting as you find mine. I feel that communication isn't easy with everybody, that they feel the same things too.

"Learning drawing for me...well I learnt drawing without having any natural talent, by someone helping who was very nice to me, and then somebody else helping then somebody else.

"And then Peter Blake, a great friend of mine who's an artist, walked in and said to me, Do you like rock'n'roll mate? And I said yeah I bloody love it, and he said who do you like, and I said I like Gene Vincent first, and Little Richard or whatever and I like wrestling and boxing and tits and criminals, but I want to do painting, and he said, well, paint that, all that stuff mate.

"And I said what a good idea. I didn't have a natural skill for drawing, I couldn't draw to save my life, but I learnt it like learning to play chords on the guitar. And I was really bloody proud when I learnt to draw. And I tried for the Royal College of Art and the happiest day of my life was the day I got in there."

What was it like once you were at the RCA. Was it a new beginning?

"Oh, I struggled like hell. I realised I wasn't going to be a painter straight away. It sorted me out. I started doing illustrations.

"Peter Blake is the man who made me go into rock'n'roll with my spirit high, cos he came up to me after a gig the Kilburns did at the RCA, incidentally, and he came up to me and he said, you know what mate, you're magic.

"And I went whaaaat! Now as a painter he never said that. That man is like a guru to me.

"What Peter Blake said to me would last me the rest of my life in rock'n'roll music, pure and simple, I knew then that I should be doing what I'm doing. I don't whether it was amazing or magic or not, it didn't matter to me."

Did it feel good once you formed Kilburn And The High Roads?

"Well, it was always changing, it was always somebody's a bit upset, so it never really felt good, it never really felt *formed* to be honest cos as soon as it felt formed somebody said they were going. The only people who ever got sacked were the drummers...

"I was really proud of those guys. You know what, we were walking down Manchester after a gig with The Who and we'd just been for an Indian....we were all walking down the road in a long line, and David, our drummer, he had crutches, and we were walking in a line, and we stopped, and we all looked at each other, an hour we were just going aaaah, look at that one, look at us, aah fuck, and we were just laughing and laughing. That kept us going for a long, long time. There weren't many times like that."

Your whole thing seems to be the way you react to things about you.

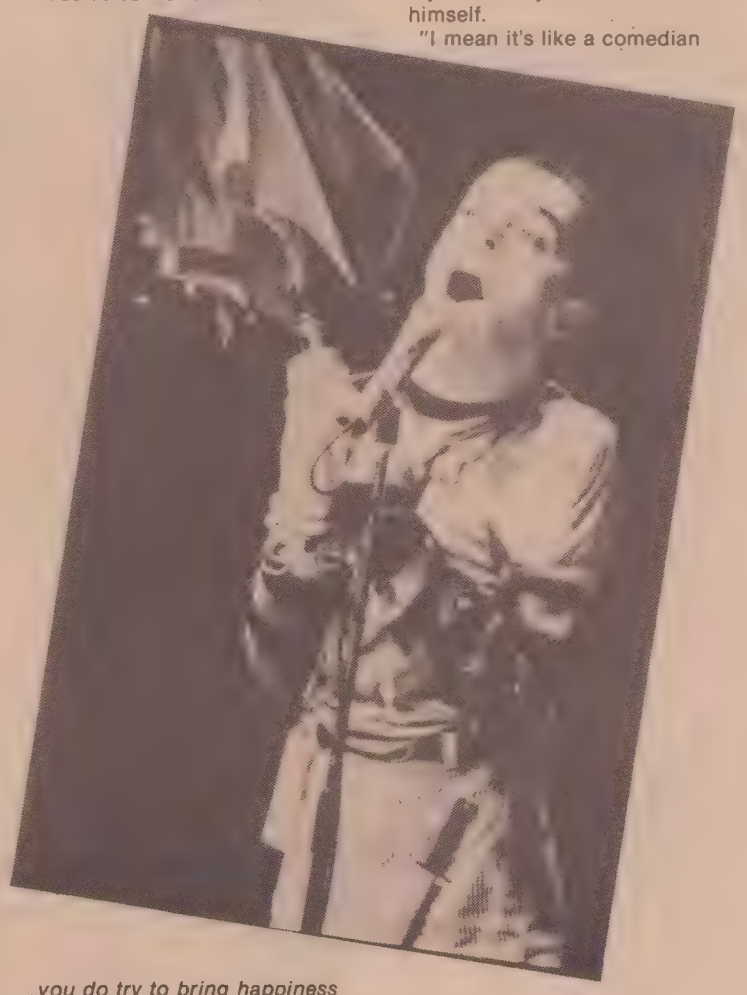
"As much as I can. I keep awake as much as I can. I've taken speed, used to take a lot but I didn't like that, so I stopped it. I get washed out every now and then....I've seen a lot of people strung out doing junk so badly it seemed to me they wanted to kill themselves rather than do junk.

"So I just smoke a joint now and again."

Do you feel happy at the moment because lots of people seem to love you?

"Sort of yeah....you know sort of yeah you know sort of you know. Know what I mean, get it! (Sings) No greater love have I, once I had a secret love, that wore my best suit trousers, cos he pissed in his own, and he went out of the house in them.

"No really, it's in love with hope. It's like being in love with being proud. It's just like being optimistic. It's very hard to feel optimistic about the world, but I do cos I don't see the point in not. I've been practising crying a lot lately, not in order to be Joan



Crawford, who can cry with either eye, but....if I can get a bit part in *Coronation Street*, to supplant Herman's Hermits in the public affection, then I will accept. If Russell Harty really wants me to go on the telly then I'll do it as long as I can have my back to the camera. I think everybody should have their ten-minute Warhol stardom then maybe they should keep their trap shut for the next ten years."

Are you toying with that idea?

"No. I've got a commitment, I think. Giving up now would be silly, but I don't want to get any more famous. I want to get less famous, have a month's holiday every so often."

When did the fame hit you?

"It was overnight. Yeah. Brighton on the Stiff Tour. I talked to Annie Nightingale who's a person I really really like and really love, and she was doing an article on me for the *Expresso* - the first time ever for me to be in a non-musical journal. And that same night I discovered it was possible for me to go to Barbados for a holiday. My manager told me there was enough money in my bank account to let me go without getting into debt, and I reconciled myself to one thing: The Scottish *Daily Mirror* said everyone should go to the Caribbean Isles to get the hotsies - but I was actually going. I had the bread to go and I had to live with that.

"Up until Feb 1976 I earned £25 a week, so this is OK, y'know - I know how to live without money.

"I love the band so much, I love everything every one's doing so much, that I feel committed to it. The people on this coach give me that. No choice. I don't really want a choice. I'm team handed. I don't feel like the captain. I'm allowed to do my bit. I've never been in that situation before in my life.

"Jankel really has a go at me. Get rid of all that lot! 'Cos the song's too long, and I think fuck it! He mixed me down on two of the tracks on the new LP."

Doesn't that upset you?

"No! 'Cos I thought there's got to be a musical reason that I don't even understand. I'm going to listen to him.

"On *Dance Of The Screamers* I can just about hear the words, just about hear Davey, and I'm trying to hear him, so....it's like shouting your head off but a long way from the megaphone and that's somehow even more real.

"The song is about what I think I felt when I felt impotent and the only idea of stating that to somebody and still hold my head up...which is just to scream....otherwise there's no point in opening your mouth I suppose...erm.

"The words really amount to nothing more than a person getting uncomfortable listening to them, so when you scream maybe it's releasing that tension. I don't know what it is. I haven't really had time to think about it. I wrote it about two days before I recorded it. I and it came together when I didn't feel impotent no more. 'Cos I'm in love again, thank God."

How real is the fame?

"It's removed my respect for myself. But the respect is coming back now a little, thanks to meeting somebody. That was horrible. I could get drunk and I was so nasty. Shouldn't happen. Unpleasant. Crying. I don't cry that much, and it's a bit crocodiley, but I don't mistrust it and I don't think crying's serious when I do it.

"Usually it's when I'm really tired, or feel really wound up. I've never felt I wanted to kill myself and I've never ever felt that I'm insane, and I've never ever felt I would go insane. At the same time I could be in a mental hospital with other people and I'd be OK. Or I could be in a prison and I coud be OK in there.

"I'm sort of mesmerised by imprisonment, by somebody's life and their experiences adding up to them being treated by the masses or being removed from the masses for a certain amount of time and put amongst sadists with sticks. I know that isn't right.

"My attitude says close the schools, and also don't hurt anybody...so if you can't close the schools without hurting anybody well leave it. Because England specifically ain't that bad - 'cos I'm allowed and alive, and so's the really dangerous geezers, the ones who really go for it.

"Sid! I only spoke to him once. He said what would you do if I made homosexual advances towards you, and I said, do you see that man over there with the bald head, I would tell him. And he looked at Fred and he said, oh O.K. I didn't know what else to say to him. I don't really like to say much about people dying, but rock'n'roll it doesn't need to kill people. It should be keeping them ALIVE. Totally, if there's ever any violence at our gigs and I see it, I stop the gig."

How do you feel when you're on stage?

"When Fred's up the front, I can see Fred. He sees us every night and if he's smiling then I think we're doing OK. If he's looking a bit grumpy it really does worry me. He's never wrong, Fred, and if he actually cracks up laughing it means I've done something I've never done before or I'm doing one of his favourites.

"If I can't see him I really get confused. 'Cos I can't see anybody out in the audience. I'm too embarrassed to look at them most of the time."

Embarrassed about what?

"I just feel a bit silly. If somebody's looking at me with rapture all over their face I want to throw a bucket of water over them.

"Some kid came up to me last year and he was going to touch me, and I said fuck off you silly prat HA HA HA. Last night all the *Stiff* people were talking about going to America. Strike it while it's hot. I don't want to conquer America at all. I feel like Britain has just conquered me completely. I feel so fucking lovely about Britain. That's made me happy."

But not too happy.

"Right. But quite happy."

After the Ludwigshafen performance I stand by the side of the empty stage watching 1,500 or so German kids filter out of the small sports hall. They leave behind a million white plastic cups and a tangible feeling of great love.

I walk backstage to the cramped rooms where the Blockheads reside. Dury has a separate room, and sits squashed up in a corner, a daft grin on his shaded face. He has made some more friends. Zen is near him, sighing protectively as Kozmo efficiently brings in some admirers.

He asks for some wine, and has to persuade the reluctant, suspicious Fred that he's only had a little bit.

A German enters with five different covers from the new *Do It Yourself* LP and Ian happily doodles all over them. There's a little girl with the visitor, blond, shy, pink, and she's not scared by Ian.

Ian plays with her, easily overcoming any language barrier. He pulls faces, rocks about, and she whispers in his ear.

On the coach for the drive from gig to hotel, Fred is barking stern orders over the coach P.A.

"And tomorrow is a free day, but on Friday you will collect in the hotel foyer at 12 o'clock..." - The Blockhead family jeer and hiss good naturedly - " ....for the drive to Frieberg where we play that night." More jeers. "And anyone who is late will be fined £5 and if you are late twice then you will be fined £10 and so on."

Norman and Mickey ask, seeing as how it's free day tomorrow, can they have their wages a day early?

"No!" shouts Fred. "If you can't make your wages last a week, if you want to booze it all away, then that's up to you."

"This is my imitation of Hugh Cornwell of The Stranglers."

Up in muted room three of the Ramada Hotel, Dury lies on his hotel bed and Zen tenderly drops some liquid into his sore eye. Ian stiffly wheels towards me and mildly moans about his ailments; the red eye, the cracking throat. He offers me a raisin tablet, a horrible confection. Such stuff, he explains with the beetroot juice and prune juice, helps the regularity of the bowels - another problem when you're on tour.

Graham the record company rep, enters with the coffee. The four of us sip and talk. I think about the new LP *Do It Yourself*, the intriguing follow up to the best seller *New Boots and Panties*.

Ian leans back in his chair and picks his legs up.

"When I went to do *Mischief* off the album, I sat down in the studio, put the cans on, and the lyric was there in front of me, and a mate was there, and nobody else except the engineers, and somebody told me that day that there was an advance order of 100,000 for the LP and I was looking at the microphone.

"And suddenly I was like at Wembley or something - know what I mean - thinking, now wait a minute, they're all listening. I thought of all these people listening and I thought there's so many of them! Oh no! *Yearagh!*

"I'm saying things on there that maybe I shouldn't say."

I remember something a friend had told me, someone who works for a TV station. At the moment they're preparing a documentary on Dury, and Ian had said that he'd rather not see the finished programme because he might find out that he's not very good. Perhaps it's this kind of vulnerability that maketh the man.

Why don't you think you should say these things, Ian?

"Well, I don't know...I don't think it's necessarily OK. I'm a bit worried about it...being on stage is different because the people see your face...that's why I don't like playing to more than 4,000 people - cos you don't have that visual communication.

"I like it when little kiddies are there and grannies...

His thoughts stop, he twitches his body into a new position, and begins again.

It took ages writing that first album. It took too long...I think it's sort of stodgy. This one was written over a period of time, but not in the same way. It was always written to a really hurried deadline...and I don't think it's stodgy, I think it's careless in places. It hasn't had enough attention from me...not inspired enough..."

Since the 1976 *Stiff* tour Ian Dury has become the most popular, significant, relevant contemporary rock performer of them all. Yet our conversations were littered with moments where he seemed to be searching for justification, trying hard to disguise a particular doubt he has about his own talent.

We chat a little about Kozmo and Fred, and all the people who surround him and inspire him. I suggest that meeting these people was somehow linked with the Ian Dury success.

"Oh absolutely. Yeah. Totally. When you're got hold of and shook and told to go and do that!...well, then you ruddy well go and do that! I've got not choice and I'm glad I've got no choice. Fred will get at me and sometimes it feels like I'm the victim! It feels like it's beyond my control."

He sniggers. "And then I turn round and say it's my fault, cos I do have to say that to myself...so I can't complain. There's no point. I do compalin! I go, Freddie!" He lets out a baby holler, his face contorted. "Like that! But only to Fred or Koz, not anybody else.

"If something is impossible for me to handle then I go straight to Fred and Koz, cos they're like brothers. And it's good they're not in the band. They do the same for everyone. Fred's like the older brother, and Koz is like the younger brother. A few weeks ago Fred made me walk through London in the sun. We were staying in Mayfair and he made me walk from Oxford street to Mayfair in the rush hour. And loads of people recognised me, but it was good cos nobody interfered with us, everyone was good vibing.

"Fred, he said to me you're really having a laugh now; yeah! this is alright this. I was fucking shaking, man, just in case it got crazy, Marc Bolanness, people touching...I fell over in the tube once - all the people went through the doors and I went AAAH! - and I was laying on the concrete and people were stamping all over me and somebody grabbed me by the jacked and pulled me out of the way. I thought my head was going to get trampled. It was horrible."

How aware do you get of your body?

Ian moves his small, disorganised frame restlessly - and replies: "Very aware. Usually one or other part of my body hurts at one particular time, cos I'm not designed properly. It's not an unbearable pain, it's an irritant rather than a pain...it's a bit frustrating...cos you always have to work things out, how to do them. if I go like that" - he stretches to his left - "I have to think of that," he pats his right leg. "Cos this won't do it...but then this is just my degree of it...

"The cure is this... If you walk down the street with no shoes you'll see a man with no feet. There's that cure. I know plenty of people who are less disabled than me make more of a fuss. And I think I am motivated - it might be the driving force that makes me want to be equal in some way. Compensate in some way. Course, you go through those changes in your head, and you just end up not giving a fuck cos there's nothing else to do about it. That's all! *Fait accompli!"*

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KNACKING THE KNACK

Somewhere between The Future of Rock'n'Roll and One Hit Wonders there's got to be an explanation for these guys.

by David Withers

Will they re-invent psychedelia next year? (pic K.O'B.)

Hype, hype, hype. I am so goddam sick of hype I could scream. The world of rock'n'roll nowadays seems based around the ideas of a handful of marketing men passing their trashy values onto an equally out-of-touch media too lethargic to know better than to shower us with dazzling film-clips, Dolly Parton T-shirts, Fonz posters, Kiss comics and Rex Smithburgers.

I mean, I thought even a rampant '70s disease like Hype had a limit until I clocked The Knack.

No shit, kids, The Knack are the Big Thing of the moment. Their album and single are currently riding the crest of the US charts. The Knack are shipping platinum big, as in big dollars, as in Pushing Product, Hitting Paydirt, Shifting Units, Achieving a Cross-Market Breakthrough and all the other criteria by which quality music is judged nowadays.

Their concerts are characterised by wild screaming, hysteria and undying, devoted reverence - and that's just their bank managers in the audience!

Furthermore, The Knack are setting the all-time precedent of doing this with virtually no exposure at all. Prior to hitting Number One, they had just gigged their local Los Angeles area steadily, recorded a modestly-budgeted ($18,000) album with producer Mike Chapman (the man with the platinum fingers) and done a few local interviews. They suddenly found themselves with a huge, huge hit in *My Sharona*. As simple as that, it seems.

The American record industry not being used to moderation, however, has quickly seized hold of the situation and hyped The Knack *after* the event. A remarkable state of affairs that has ultimately resulted in the band being thrust upon us as the New Messiahs of a wilting rock scene - fresh, innovative, taking us back to our roots and into a new era.... WWWWWHAAAAATTTT?

To their credit, let it be said from the outset that The Knack themselves don't pander to this sort of overly-enthusiastic use of imagination on the part of the marketing boys. They are this simple: four fresh-faced boys from Hollywood who treat life as if it were girls and rock'n'roll 24 hours a day. Lead singer and chief brain Doug Fieger in particular, is one of that obsessed breed totally in love with all things rock'n'pop, and the fact that his own music is receiving so much attention can't help but make him feel, basically, absolutely wonderful. They're all equally unaffected when it comes to talking.

"There was a banner in New Zealand," says buck-toothed lead guitarist Burton Averre, "and it said: 'The Knack - The Biggest Band In The World At Their Peak!'

"And believe me, we cringe at that sort of thing.

"You'll notice that the only push you've seem simply says 'Get The Knack'. If it's not real, we don't want it. We're definitely not going to cram The Knack down people's throats."

Maybe not you, sugar, but somebody else is sure giving it a try. Aren't you worried about this kind of concerted effort to make you overnight superstars?

"Our album and single went to Number One without us touring nationally at all," points our Fieger, wearily patient. "We have never done any national press. There was one thing in Rolling Stone, and that was a picture taken when Bruce Springsteen jumped up and jammed with us.

"So there has not been any hype on The Knack."

This is rhubarb, of course, because as far as I'm concerned The Knack - no matter how disarmingly charming Fieger and the rest of the band can be - just has to be the most out-of-orbit hype ever perpetrated by an American record industry hell-bent mad on the search for the next mega-buck.

The Knack are a fresh band, sure, and play a passable blend of clean pop, but to pass them off as anything more significant is plainly laughable. The fact is that The Knack - with their black and white back-to-basics and low-budget album - are doing nothing that English punk bands weren't trying two years ago.

And to act like they're some kind of New Beginning for rock music - which is quite literally how the press at their Melbourne Press Conference treated them - is equally ludicrous considering the carefully planned strategy behind them and - most importantly - the incredibly derivative nature of their image. It's just the same Americanised business contrivance packaged in different clothes.

Major point about The Knack, natch, is that everyone's making the Big Comparison - The Beatles. That was a hackneyed media exercise I chose to ignore until I went to their press conference and felt like I'd been thrown back into the squeaky-clean days of 1965. As well as the obvious similarities in both visuals and marketing (Get The Knack - Meet The Beatles, for instance), these guys act and dress so much like the Fab Four 15 years on that it's not really worth discussing. The same boyish smiles, the same playful wittiness, and the same quick-fire repartee with the press. e.g:

Q: "Will you release a live album?" (!)

A: "Only for historical purposes, so that people can say: So *that's* what they sounded like before they got their MBE's.'"

Q: "Your album only cost $18,000 to make?"

"$15,000 actually. The other $3,00 went on booze and refreshments."

And it must be a prime example of the depths to which we've sunk when a band that, after all, is simply stringing together the few simple ingredients of rock'n'roll as she has been played for decades, could somehow be regarded as (ulp) revolutionary. Fieger himself makes it clear what he thinks of this exaggeration when he says, "We don't look at ourselves as leaders.

"I think rock'n'roll has always been about songs," he adds with a shrug. "We write songs..."

Quite rightfully, Fieger sees The Knack as simply an extension of all the rock heroes he has admired - from Elvis, through The Beatles, to Johnny Rotten and Elvis again.

"It was very funny in the late '60s," he says, "when it was unhip to be unhip. It was uncool to be pop, but it was cool to be underground. Because everybody got really serious about rock music.

"You had a guy like Jim Morrison, who thought it was a great joke and just thumbed his nose at everyone. He'd lie down for a whole concert, and then people would come out and say: 'Jim made a great statement - he LAY DOWN!'

"You had people sitting around wondering: What does he *mean* by 'Fixing a hole so the rain can't get in?'

"The Beatles did the best things and the worst things for rock'n'roll," Fieger theorises. "The best thing they did was to introduce fun in 1964. Then when *Sergeant Pepper* came out, you had Time Magazine describing it as 'art'.

"I look at art and I look at what we're doing," he laughs, "and what we do is definitely *not* art. I don't look at rock'n'roll as art. I look at it as craft.

"I just remember Van Gogh cutting off his ear and blowing up things, and if they're the sacrifices you have to make...I think I'll go back to working in a bank."

"Rock'n'roll," adds Averre, "is just a little too silly."

An admirably self-effacing outlook, you'd have to agree. But when Averre comes out with statements like "every tune we write is gonna be a hit", the real depths of The Knack's naivety are revealed. These guys have all been around a while, but they're in it up to their mop-tops at the moment, and it's not all going to be girls, gigs and gags.

"The whole thing is really neat," says Averre with an open smile. "It's really indescribable coming to a new country and playing our music."

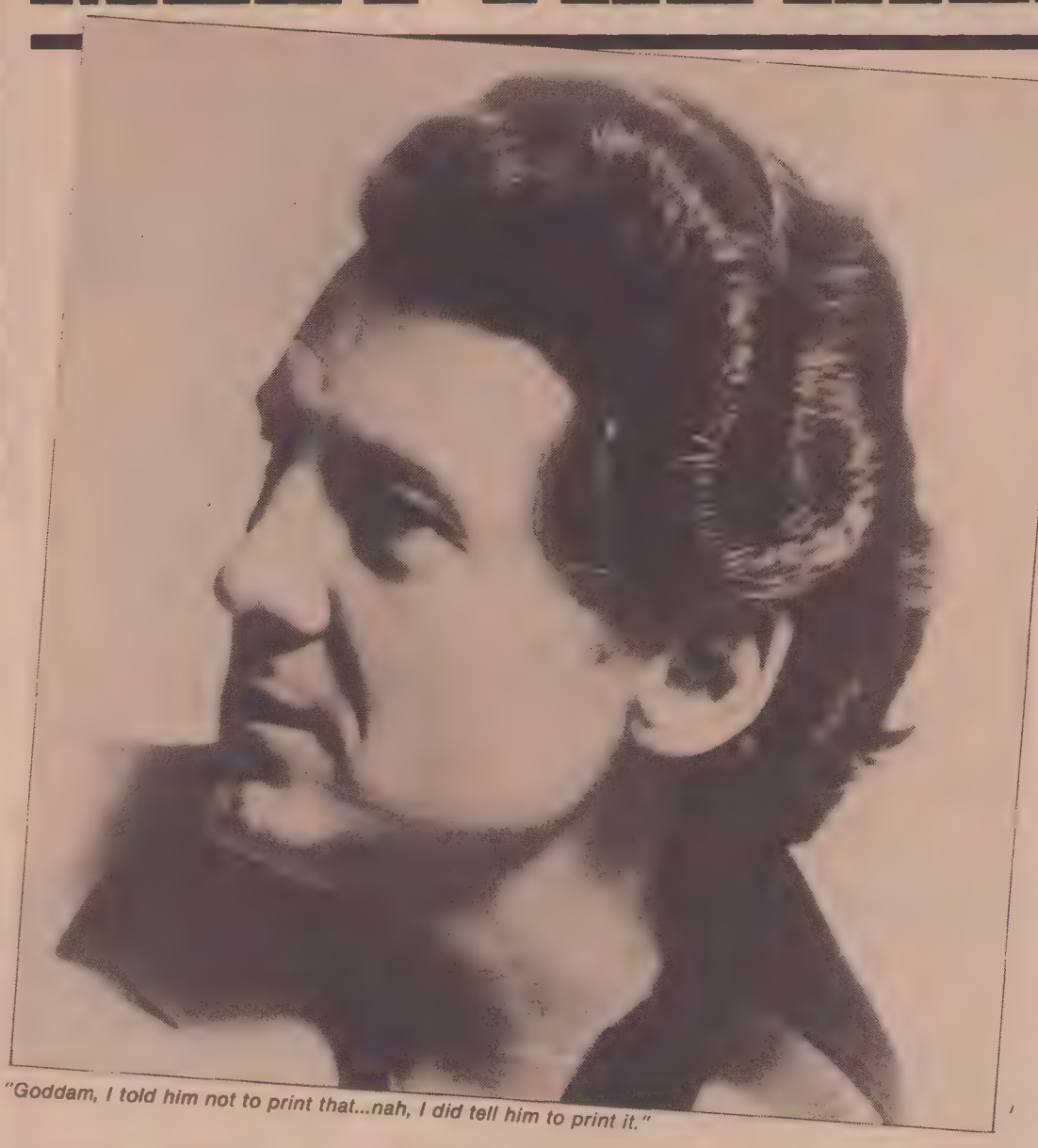
I certainly hope it stays that way.

(pic Patrick Jones)

MEET THE KILLER

In the beginning there were four Rock Immortals. Elvis, Chuck Berry, Little Richard and.... Jerry Lee Lewis. Jerry Lee's now in Oz, for a low key club tour. He rarely gives interviews but Cliff White got him talking about women, liquor and the devil.

"Today he's 40 years old, going on 20, Don't look for the grey in his hair 'cause he ain't got any, He's got a young thing beside him, that just melts in his hands, He's a middle-age crazy, trying to prove he still can."



"Goddam, I told him not to print that...nah, I did tell him to print it."

In truth he'll be 44 on September 29, his current lady was not beside him on his recent European tour, and other personal details in the rest of the song are not his. But in spirit, when on each night of the tour Jerry Lee Lewis restated in his own inimitable manner Sonny Throckmorton's ballad of a restless man fighting the inevitable, he was owning up. *Middle Age Crazy* indeed.

To be a 44 year old inveterate rock'n'roller is itself paradox enough for one man to try to come to terms with. To be a 44 year old inveterate rock'n'roller who believes that his music and lifestyle are sinful but who cannot change to save his soul is a mightier head-banger still. To suffer, on top of that, an equally ambivalent and self-torturing inner-conflict about women and marriage, along the traditional lines of "you can't live with 'em and you can't live without 'em", adds up to a sufficiently heavy mental burden to tip the scales towards mixed-up confusion.

Crazy enough, even, to be Jerry Lee Lewis.

Naked to the waist except for a small towel slung around his shoulders, Jerry sat hunched on the edge of an easy chair in one corner of the room, nursing a half-finished bottle of lager.

He looks his age but carries it well. The once-familiar features that gradually filled out during the '60s have now tightened again and regrouped into a craggy variant of the Kirk Douglas mould, his hair is still all his own and the moderate glob of middle-age spread above his belt shows little evidence of 25 years of hard drinking.

From the outset The Killer was affable, and once he'd sussed me out he relaxed completely, speaking honestly about himself and his hang-ups.

Despite his self-confessed love of booze he drank very little during the two or three hours I was with him (just the rest of the bottle of beer and a couple of slugs of Seagrams whisky) and he didn't smoke at all.

Nevertheless, his rich southern drawl was hoarse and slurred enough to make him sound like a chain-smoking dispo; a result, I'd guess, of fatigue and prescribed medication. Jerry doesn't like to sleep these days - not on his own, anyway - nor does he seem to eat a lot. When I met him he'd been without much rest or sustenance for five days straight.

Without getting into phonetical gibberish and theatrical asides it's impossible to relate our conversation accurately. As well as the bayou brogue, he speaks like he sings in a shifting, often contradictory flow of emotions that aren't apparent in the coldly printed word . . . (pause) . . . and his timing is immaculate.

For instance, Jerry spoke with genuine sorrow about the break-up of his marriage to Myra - the marriage which offended puritan society and badly disrupted his career (Myra is his 2nd or 3rd cousin and was only 13 or 14 when they married) but which confounded gossip by lasting nearly 15 years. The marriage ended after many ups and downs when Myra caught Jerry bang-to-rights with an Indian girlfriend.

"I'm sorry I lost her," Jerry sighed, "but I just got caught." Mischievous chuckle. "That Indian girl, I just couldn't turn her down." Laughs, then realises what he's said. "Oh! Please don't print that. If Myra sees that I'll never get her back."

No, I won't print . . . I start to assure him.

"Oh print it" - reckless again - "I don't care." But then uncertain. "No wait a minute, let me think about it." Laughs to himself.

Don't worry, I begin again, I won't . . .

Assertive now; mind made up. "Cliff, you print what you want to print, I'm only joking. I'm telling you the truth though; I would never lie to you." Warms to the subject, almost as if admonishing me, or perhaps himself, for thinking otherwise. "I believe in being truthful. . . I don't believe in conning people . . . I don't believe in saying something that's not right. Tell it like it is. Be what you are man. Don't give me no phoney person."

As you can see, it's a bugger to transcribe. Anyway, we'll do our best.

Following on Lewis' train of thought, I ask whether he has had any regrets in his life.

"Regrets?" He pauses just long enough . . ."Yup. I can't find that Indian girl." Collapse of everyone in the room. Jerry laughs right along, but wonders if he's said the wrong thing. Again.

"Nah," he finally assures himself, "Myra'd get a kick out o' that . She'd laugh right along." Pause. "But it *is* true."

Later in the day, when marriage once again cast its tangled net over the conversation, another convulsion of Lewisisms chased each other round his mind. Try this lot without stage directions.

"I have been married ever since I was 15 years old and now I'm gonna be a single man. I wonder how that's gonna be? Not very, very good, is it? I need a woman around, but I'd hate to have to live with one without marrying her. I love to say, 'I do'.

"I'm easily talked into it. Really. Every woman I've ever married asked me to marry them, I didn't ask them to marry me. Sumpin' wrong, somewhere.

"They done me dirty ... and I've been an angel ... in disguise. *Nahh*, that's not true, I don't regret *any* of my marriages . . . I don't think. Yeah I do! I wish I'd never got married in the first place. I should *never* have gotten married. *Nahh;* I should have. *Nahh;* I shouldn't have.

"If I had to do it over I'd do the same thing. I love it. They were good people... it just didn't work out. It's funny, ten years ago I come out with *Another Place, Another Time*, a tearjerker, y'know? Put me back in the charts .... and doing a Shakespeare play at the same time .... I had my wife, I was happy and I was doing good. What happened?"

One small thing that happened was that Jerry got wed to the country charts, where he has been consistently successful for the last decade, despite rarely managing even a minor affair with the pop charts. So, apart from occasional appearances on American oldie-but-goodie shows and the odd sprint round Europe now and then, he has been out of the centre-ring spotlight for a good proportion of his career. In his own estimation that's as much due to lack of promotion as anything, so after 16 years with the Phonogram corp he signed with Elektra/Asylum.

"I don't dig that country crap .....hillbilly guitar pluckers, ya know? What is country music? Is it Roy Acuff? If it is, to hell with it. You can't classify Hank Williams as a country singer... he was too smart; his words, his pronunciation and the way he had it. Not like, say... well, I'm not gonna say 'cause I know all these people.

"Willie Nelson is fantastic but it took him 20 years to get a hit, gotta remember that. And Waylon Jennings .... those two together, man, they're still just guitar players and singers. I always tell 'em that, it makes 'em mad. I play piano; it's got a lot more strings on it .... a lot harder to tame."

On the other hand, they're writers as well. You've written very few songs in your time.

"I don't want to get into writing because I'm scared of it. It'll kill ya. Anybody that writes songs, like Hank Williams or Kris Kristofferson ...Kris had to quit writing. If he hadn't he'd be dead. It killed Hank Williams.

"All your great writers...it takes something out of you. You get in different moods...I don't know, I can't really explain it. You get all boozed up. I mean it's not worth it.

"There's too many good writers anyway. I'd rather just play the piano and sing.

"I'm just not gonna sit here and lie to you. I like good whisky, good looking women and good music.

"I don't handle dope too good. Tried pot one time and it just didn't work. I tried to make it to my car, it took me 30 minites and it wasn't half a block away. If I smoke a joint it's all over but the crying. It'd take me 30 minutes to get this bottle up to my mouth. I'll be driving my car and I'll be down to 10 miles an hour. If I played piano, everything'd be going so slow there'd be no rock'n'roll. I don't know why it is, but I just can't handle it so I don't fool with it.

"And I've never tried hard dope, *ever*. The man is a fool who does that. You won't find no needle marks on these arms. But whisky? . . . makes me frisky."

How often do you like to be completely straight; clear headed and stone cold sober?

"I don't believe in that. I'm scared to death to do that. If I do that I might get real ripe. *Nahh*. I'm usually straight when I'm home.

"I got a six-bedroomed home, six bath, den, kitchen... I got a real nice place; the prettiest place anywhere round Memphis. But it's way out in the country. Nobody lives around me; I'm alone. I got some horses and a 10-acre lake in my backyard . . .

"You're supposed to marry and settle down, I guess. And raise a family and sit by the fireplace, chew tobacco and spit and watch TV and be an idiot. But me, I'm a rock'n'roller. Play my piano and sing, make love to the best looking women I can find and drink good, good whisky."

'I'm a religious minded person...I used to be a preacher. Went to Bible School in Texas. Assembly of God, but I'm just a little too weak, I couldn't quite make it. But at least I'm man enough to admit it. I'm a rock'n'roll singer."

Don't you think that religion and rock'n'roll can go together?

"No, it don't work. You can't be on two sides of the fence at the same time. The Bible teaches you that you can't serve God and Mammon, you can't serve two masters."

But why does rock'n'roll have to be Mammon?

"Rock'n'roll....I don't know. That's a hard question to answer, it really is. I love rock'n'roll...but I couldn't really picture Jesus Christ singing *Whole Lotta Shakin'*.

"I believe in Heaven and I believe in Hell. There's two places and we're all gonna go to one or the other. And I know how to live. I know what's right and what's wrong . . . and I don't even live it. That makes me an even worse sinner. I know I'm wrong, cussin', carryin' on, screwing women, doing everything . . . There is a way that seemeth right under man but the way that is leadeth to destruction.

"Destruction is very easy to find, know what I mean?

"I sure don't want to go to Hell. I pray to God I don't. But I'm weak...weak as water. I never could make it, I think I'll probably go to Hell if I don't change my way of living...

..."Give me that whisky."

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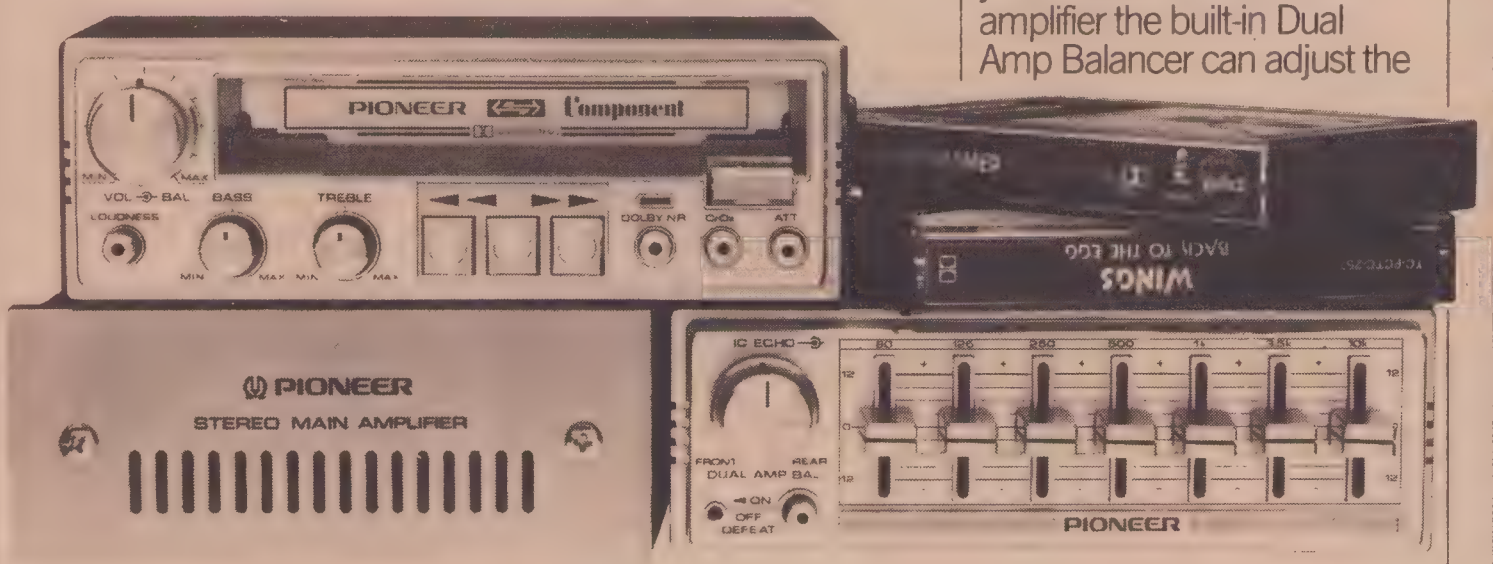

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140,000 FANS CAN'T BE WRONG! LED ZEPPELIN STILL ROOL ROCK'S ROOST. BUT...

Paul Morley encounters the Ghosts of Progressive Rock Past.

If playing it makes Jimmy feel like this, imagine how the guitar feels.

In a way Knebworth is a glory sign of the importance and hugeness of rock'n'roll. How can over 140,000 people collecting from literally all over the world be dismissed?

Yet in other ways it is a sorry sign of the impotence of rock'n'roll when it becomes so gargantuan, a frightening hint of how rock'n'roll in the past moved through the process of celebration and could have, without the regenerating might of New Wave, sunk in a lazy wash of self-regulating, self-perpetuating self-congratulation.

The sixth Annual Knebworth Park Fesitval was like a ghost of those simpler, smoother progressive rock days, ironically saved only by the nervous energy and genuine amazed-to-be-there vitality of the accepted Holy Ghosts themselves, Led Zeppelin.

Events like Knebworth will fade away not due to lack of interest (there are more than enough people who will never accept the limitations and cramped pretensions of the progressive rock mutants), but because of the stupefying complacency and inevitability of it all.

And yet the only moments that connected the rock'n'roll of Knebworth with the rock'n'roll of things like liberation and outrage, abandon and passion were during those periods when Led Zeppelin kept within the narrow range of their true expertise and played some of the most exhilarating music that I've heard this year. Such moments seemed out of place.

The implications of Knebworth are an indication of the stagnation of one level of rock and the amount of people absolutely unwilling to damn old traditions.

Led Zeppelin are a symbol of this and probably deserve that position.

At times they did play rock'n'roll as immense and intense as it's possible to get considering the necessary limitations the group occasionally impose upon themselves. But when they lost that discipline and pretended they could be profound and subtle, they were tedious: a true progressive rock group. And the reason progressive rock declined so decisively was because of the musicians' appalling smugness and dogmatism, their careless determination that they could stretch into areas where their experience and understanding was minimal. Zeppelin were no exception.

But they are one of the few groups of that era and that school of thought who can make some sort of sense in the contemporary scheme of things. Perhaps out of curiosity or desperation, they did blend their base heavy rock with all sorts of vague strains and they also attempted to push out the borders of heavy metal by exploring the possibility of repetition and structure.

When Led Zeppelin play rock'n'roll - *Trampled Underfoot* is a classic example - I can begin to understand why people call them the greatest. But I can't *agree* with that statement because when the group lose the discipline, when they indulge themselves, when they naively romanticise and sentimentalise, they are infuriating.

Never have I heard a group so magnificent and so appalling within the space of one set.

During John Paul Jones' flat and uneventful piano part in *No Quarter*, it was sad that they could get away with ineffectual drivel.

Led Zeppelin are held in reverential awe even by those who openly despise them. This is ridiculous. It means that the new music, dismissed by the progressive music community as trivial and transient, is not mentioned in the same breath as the group. The thought that Led Zeppelin are 'above' the new music is poisonous, but established.

One of the major benefits of Zeppelin playing Knebworth is that even in their comparative triumph they shatter such illusions. They reduced themselves. It need not be avoided any more, nor is it particularly detrimental, to say that the majority of the masterfully produced but erratic and naive music the group recorded has been surpassed many times over by young groups thrown up by New Wave.

It is the phenomenon of Zeppelin that should be held in awe. But, equally, it is the myth that should be despised and pitied. Not the music.

Led Zeppelin have made great rock'n'roll. They can fit into what rock'n'roll is now as well as the Stones or The Who - and you can take that whatever way you want. Certainly they don't deserve to be bracketed any where near Judas Priest, Van Halen, Kiss or Rainbow.

I'm considering them in a contemporary perspective, finding them not awkward or flatulent at all but in lots of ways exciting.

The comeback was faced with ridiculously unfair complications, and all we can say is: What took you so long?

There is no reason why Zeppelin should ever speak again; no one has any right to demand activity. One of the bravest moves of the year must be Zeppelin performing when the blanket of suspicion, cynicism and indeed *hate* must have been suffocating.

Even so they and their fans have to acknowledge that everything has changed. Zeppelin music is not invincible. It is full of the artifciality and unfortunate magniloquence of the typical progressive rock music; and that means that more often than not it's less than vital.

But they did come back, like something dragged out of another time, and for them to have any impact and effect in the contemporary flow they're going to have to get their bearings quickly and change around a lot. They will surely want to do something more elegant than become the vulgar episodic '80s equivalent of revivalists like Chuck Berry.

On the day, as far as everything else goes, it would be cruel not to praise the Zeppelin. They were much more than a stabilised anachronism. They did more than enough not to embarass themselves. At times they were playing rock'n'roll of such stinging insistence and convulsive perseverence it wouldn't have mattered how old or processed it was. There was little else they needed to do or could have done.

Led Zeppelin made the Knebworth hollowness into something that I would call An Occasion without being embarrassed. Of course, by the time they appeared, it was dark and the atmosphere was not one of impending doom.

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones and John Bonham enjoyed themselves and showed it. This is probably the one reason they've returned. They played erratically and delightfully for over three hours. What was most noticeable was the relative brand new economy, the nervousness and the unexpected edgy spontaneity.

There were less extended solo passages of limp, presumptuous sluggishness. Page managed to keep his legendary but insubstantial guitar extroversion comparitively restrained. There was very little barren jamming. As Plant was introducing songs there was a definite shake in his voice.

At the start he seemed quite choked.

"How's everything?" he'd ask when lost for words, and a couple of times he attempted to apologise for the repeated delays of the new LP.

Jimmy Page just kept grinning and sweating and dropping into the intent poses that prompted a thousand imitators.

It all ended as everybody present must have hoped it would. The final five pieces - the classics of the Zeppelin myth - typified the extremity of the overall performance.

Kashmir was meticulous and banal; *Stairway to Heaven* faithful and delicate. During these two pieces I drifted into uneasy half-sleep, thus, as everybody was telling me, missed the laser effects that did wonderful things around Page's body - although I heard in the distance the stunned gasps that greeted the sight.

People set fire to newspapers, tents, wood and themselves to bring Zeppelin back for encores: *Rock'n'Roll*, *Whole Lotta Love* and *Heartbreaker*. During this section Led Zeppelin were the stuff of good memories.

Led Zeppelin didn't do enough to live up to their distorted legend, but that was surely not what it was about.

They didn't do anything that proved the last three years have been a waste of time. Within their own definition they did nothing that was unusual.

What they did do was prove that they're a clever, conceited, old-fashioned rock'n'roll group who stil have drastic lapses in taste and discipline; that they're not heroes; that they are survivors; that they have a lot to do to surpass their own past work, and much more if they're to be properly innovative and speculative.

Because of their naivity and stubborness, I do think they deserve real respect. Not the empty, clinging respect of their obsessive fans, but considered respect that having been essentially unwitting victims of rock'n'roll's ugly drift into ill-fitting big business, having become so unbelievably massive not due to any consistent magnificence but because of the way rock'n'roll developed - inwardly inverted - they have tried to ignore it all and play some rock'n'roll. And what's more deplorable and sad? What's happened to the Pistols, or what's happened to Zeppelin?

Rock'n'roll is still so young, and groups like Zeppelin faced new, unknown problems of growth, fame, compromise and creativity. Who can tell whether the way Zeppelin reacted was the only way possible or truly disgusting?

No one will ever be so big and trapped again, not because rock'n'roll is declining, but because the load is being spread. I respect what Led Zeppelin did, and although I may eventually lose that respect, right now I'm on their side.

After all, they're just four confused, naive craftsmen who got themselves tangled in the ridiculous paradoxes through little fault of their own: idiots more than Gods.

Led Zeppelin at Knebworth were A Triumph. I didn't expect or demand anything from them. I don't need them. I don't care whether they go away for another bunch of years.

But over 140,000 people can't be wrong. And neither can I.

OZ SINGLES

This Week	Last		
1	(4)	UP THERE CAZALY	The Two-Man Band
2	(1)	SOME GIRLS	Racey
3	(3)	RING MY BELL	Anita Ward
4	(9)	•MY SHARONA	The Knack
5	(7)	I WAS MADE FOR LOVIN' YOU	Kiss
6	(5)	COOL FOR CATS	UK Squeeze
7	(2)	POP MUZIK	M
8	(6)	BRIGHT EYES	Art Garfunkel
9	(13)	YOU CAN'T CHANGE THAT	Raydio
10	(8)	REUNITED	Peaches & Herb
11	(10)	ONE WAY TICKET	Eruption
12	(12)	BOOGIE WONDERLAND	Earth Wind & Fire with The Emotions
13	(11)	HOT STUFF	Donna Summer
14	(17)	BAD GIRLS	Donna Summer
15	(15)	IS SHE REALLY GOING OUT WITH HIM?	Joe Jackson
16	(14)	GET USED TO IT	Roger Voudouris
17	(18)	LIGHT MY FIRE	Amii Stewart
18	(32)	•GOLD	John Stewart
19	(16)	DIAMONDS	Chris Rea
20	(19)	LONESOME LOSER	Little River Band
21	(30)	•HIT AND RUN	Jo Jo Zep And The Falcons
22	(25)	HELLO, THIS IS JOANNIE	Paul Evans
23	(26)	SHOOTING STAR	Dollar
24	(21)	LOVE DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE	Rose Royce
25	(28)	ISLAND NIGHTS	Marc Hunter
26	(20)	LAY YOUR LOVE ON ME	Racey
27	(22)	SHINE A LITTLE LOVE	Electric Light Orchestra
28	(29)	LET'S GET BACK TOGETHER	Promises
29	(34)	•BUT YOU DON'T CARE	Mi-Sex
30	(38)	•THE NIPS ARE GETTING BIGGER	Mental As Anything
31	(39)	•BAD CASE OF LOVIN' YOU (DOCTOR, DOCTOR)	Robert Palmer
32	(24)	LOST IN LOVE	Air Supply
33	(36)	MIAMI	John Cougar
34	(23)	DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW	Abba
35	(35)	I WANNA MAKE IT WITH YOU TONIGHT	Monalisa and Terry Young
36	(27)	HOORAY, HOORAY, IT'S A HOLI-HOLIDAY	Boney M
37	(—)	SHE BELIEVES IN ME	Kenny Rogers
38	(—)	BORN TO BE ALIVE	Patrick Hernandez
39	(—)	HANGING ON THE TELEPHONE	Blondie
40	(—)	WE ARE FAMILY	Sister Sledge

OZ ALBUMS

This Week	Last		
1	(1)	DISCOVERY	Electric Light Orchestra
2	(3)	FIRST UNDER THE WIRE	Little River Band
3	(2)	THE VERY BEST OF LEO SAYER	Leo Sayer
4	(9)	•GET THE KNACK	The Knack
5	(5)	ENGLISH HISTORY	Jon English
6	(4)	BACK TO THE EGG	Wings
7	(6)	BREAKFAST IN AMERICA	Supertramp
8	(7)	FATE FOR BREAKFAST	Art Garfunkel
9	(10)	DYNASTY	Kiss
10	(8)	RUST NEVER SLEEPS	Neil Young & Crazy Horse
11	(11)	NO EXIT	The Angels
12	(12)	BAD GIRLS	Donna Summer
13	(13)	RICKIE LEE JONES	Rickie Lee Jones
14	(14)	I AM	Earth Wind & Fire
15	(19)	SCREAMING TARGETS	Jo Jo Zep And The Falcons
16	(15)	THE BOB SEGER COLLECTION	Bob Seger
17	(17)	COMMUNIQUE	Dire Straits
18	(24)	•BOMBS AWAY DREAM BABIES	John Stewart
19	(31)	•5	J.J. Cale
20	(22)	COOL FOR CATS	UK Squeeze
21	(16)	FOREVER AND EVER	Demis Roussos
22	(26)	GRAFFITI CRIMES	Mi-Sex
23	(18)	VOULEZ-VOUS	Abba
24	(20)	FLAG	James Taylor
25	(21)	NIGHT OWL	Gerry Rafferty
26	(23)	LOOK SHARP!	Joe Jackson
27	(25)	SECRETS	Robert Palmer
28	(28)	CANDY-O	The Cars
29	(27)	LIVE KILLERS	Queen
30	(30)	LODGER	David Bowie
31	(29)	BOB DYLAN AT BUDOKAN	Bob Dylan
32	(35)	FACE TO FACE	The Angels
33	(32)	DELTICS	Chris Rea
34	(—)	•THE ROUSSOS PHENOMENON	Demis Roussos
35	(37)	LAND OF FORTUNE	Stars
36	(38)	OOH CHILD	Marcia Hines
37	(33)	PARALLEL LINES	Blondie
38	(34)	LIFE SUPPORT	Air Supply
39	(36)	MINUTE BY MINUTE	Doobie Brothers
40	(—)	BUSHFIRE	The Bushwackers Band

U.K. SINGLES

This Week	Last		
1	(1)	I DON'T LIKE MONDAYS	Boomtown Rats
2	(2)	WE DON'T TALK ANYMORE	Cliff Richard
3	(3)	REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL PART 3	Ian Dury and the Blockheads
4	(5)	AFTER THE LOVE IS GONE	Earth Wind & Fire
5	(4)	HERSHAM BOYS	Sham 69
6	(16)	•BANG BANG	B.A. Robertson
7	(14)	•GANGSTERS	Specials
8	(8)	ANGEL EYES/VOULEZ-VOUS	Abba
9	(13)	DUKE OF EARL	Darts
10	(6)	DIARY OF HORACE WIMP	Electric Light Orchestra
11	(19)	•OOH! WHAT A LIFE	Gibson Brothers
12	(9)	WANTED	Dooleys
13	(7)	CAN'T STAND LOSING YOU	Police
14	(15)	ANGEL EYES	Roxy Music
15	(17)	STAY WITH ME TILL DAWN	Judie Tzuke
16	(18)	MORNING DANCE	Spyro Gyra
17	(28)	•MONEY	Flying Lizards
18	(10)	BEAT THE CLOCK	Sparks
19	(23)	IS SHE REALLY GOING OUT WITH HIM?	Joe Jackson
20	(27)	•SWEET LITTLE ROCK'N'ROLLER	Showaddywaddy
21	(11)	BORN TO BE ALIVE	Patrick Hernandez
22	(24)	GOTTA GO HOME	Boney M
23	(12)	GIRLS TALK	Dave Edmunds
24	(—)	•LOST IN MUSIC	Sister Sledge
25	(29)	JUST WHEN I NEEDED YOU MOST	Randy Vanwarmer
26	(—)	DUCHESS	Stranglers
27	(—)	WHEN YOU ARE YOUNG	Jam
28	(—)	STREET LIFE	Crusaders
29	(21)	IF I HAD YOU	Korgis
30	(—)	TEENAGE WARNING	Angelic Upstarts

U.K. ALBUMS

This Week	Last		
1	(1)	THE BEST DISCO ALBUM IN THE WORLD	Various Artists
2	(3)	DISCOVERY	Electric Light Orchestra
3	(2)	REPLICAS	Tubeway Army
4	(4)	BREAKFAST IN AMERICA	Supertramp
5	(5)	I AM	Earth Wind & Fire
6	(7)	VOULEZ-VOUS	Abba
7	(6)	PARALLEL LINES	Blondie
8	(7)	OUTLANDOS D'AMOUR	Police
9	(15)	•SOME PRODUCT, CARRI ON	SEX PISTOLS Sex Pistols
10	(10)	BEST OF THE DOOLEYS	GTO
11	(12)	BRIDGES	John Williams
12	(11)	COMMUNIQUE	Dire Straits
13	(20)	•MORNING DANCE	Spyro Gyra
14	(18)	EXPOSED	Mike Oldfield
15	(14)	STREETLIFE	Crusaders
16	(13)	NIGHT OWL	Gerry Rafferty
17	(9)	DO IT YOURSELF	Ian Dury and the Blockheads
19	(16)	B-52's	
20	(22)	MANILOW MAGIC	Barry Manilow
21	(17)	HIGHWAY TO HELL	AC/DC
	(29)	•DOWN TO EARTH	Rainbow
23	(26)	BOP TILL YOU DROP	Ry Cooder
24	(21)	RUST NEVER SLEEPS	Neil Young and Crazy Horse
25	(—)	•TUBEWAY ARMY	
26	(28)	RICKIE LEE JONES	
27	(—)	20 GOLDEN GREATS	Beach Boys
28	(24)	WELCOME TO THE CRUISE	Judie Tzuke
	(—)	LAST THE WHOLE NIGHT LONG	James Last
30	(27)	LODGER	David Bowie

Two albums tied for 21st and 28th positions.

U.S. SINGLES

This Week	Last		
1	(1)	MY SHARONA	The Knack
2	(2)	GOOD TIMES	Chic
3	(4)	THE MAIN EVENT/FIGHT	Barbra Streisand
4	(3)	BAD GIRLS	Donna Summer
5	(7)	THE DEVIL WENT DOWN TO GEORGIA	Charlie Daniels Band
6	(5)	WHEN YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN	Dr Hook
7	(9)	AFTER THE LOVE IS GONE	Earth Wind & Fire
8	(11)	LEAD ME ON	Maxine Nightingale
9	(6)	RING MY BELL	Anita Ward
10	(10)	MAMA CAN'T BUY YOU LOVE	Elton John
11	(14)	SAD EYES	Robert John
12	(15)	DON'T BRING ME DOWN	Electric Light Orchestra
13	(8)	GOLD	John Stewart
14	(18)	LONESOME LOSER	Little River Band
15	(17)	LET'S GO	The Cars
16	(19)	I'LL NEVER LOVE THIS WAY AGAIN	Dionne Warwick
17	(12)	SHINE A LITTLE LOVE	Electric Light Orchestra
18	(20)	GOODBYE STRANGER	Supertramp
19	(13)	I WAS MADE FOR LOVIN' YOU	Kiss
20	(22)	SUSPICIONS	Eddie Rabbitt
21	(16)	I WANT YOU TO WANT ME	Cheap Trick
22	(21)	IS SHE REALLY GOING OUT WITH HIM?	Joe Jackson
23	(29)	•HEAVEN MUST HAVE SENT YOU	Bonnie Pointer
24	(23)	MAKIN' IT	David Naughton
25	(30)	•BAD CASE OF LOVIN' YOU (DOCTOR, DOCTOR)	Robert Palmer
26	(24)	AIN'T NO STOPPIN' US NOW	McFadden and Whitehead
27	(27)	MORNING DANCE	Spyro Gyra
28	(—)	HOT SUMMER NIGHTS	Nights
29	(—)	BORN TO BE ALIVE	Patrick Hernadez
30	(—)	I DO LOVE YOU	G.Q.

U.S. ALBUMS

This Week	Last		
1	(1)	GET THE KNACK	The Knack
2	(2)	BAD GIRLS	Donna Summer
3	(3)	CANDY-O	The Cars
4	(4)	BREAKFAST IN AMERICA	Supertramp
5	(5)	I AM	Earth Wind & Fire
6	(6)	DISCOVERY	Electric Light Orchestra
7	(9)	MILLION MILE REFLECTION	Charlie Daniels Band
8	(7)	TEDDY	Teddy Pendergrass
9	(11)	RUST NEVER SLEEPS	Neil Young and Crazy Horse
10	(8)	CHEAP TRICK AT BUDOKAN	
11	(—)	•RISQUE	Chic
12	(15)	REALITY...WHAT A CONCEPT	Robin Williams
13	(10)	THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT	Who
14	(14)	RICKIE LEE JONES	
15	(30)	•FIRST UNDER THE WIRE	Little River Band
16	(12)	BACK TO THE EGG	Wings
17	(17)	BOMBS AWAY DREAM BABIES	John Stewart
18	(—)	•MIDNIGHT MAGIC	Commodores
19	(16)	DYNASTY	Kiss
20	(22)	THE MAIN EVENT	Original Soundtrack
21	(23)	THE BOSS	Diana Ross
22	(26)	LOW BUDGET	The Kinks
23	(18)	THE GAMBLER	Kenny Rogers
24	(24)	VAN HALEN II	Van Halen
25	(25)	STREETLIFE	Crusaders
26	(29)	SECRETS	Robert Palmer
27	(28)	VOULEZ-VOUS	Abba
28	(21)	DESOLATION ANGELS	Bad Company
29	(—)	CARS	The Cars
30	(—)	WHAT CHA GONNA DO WITH MY LOVIN'	Stephanie Mills

charts

VINYLISING

What's a "Frippertronic", Dad?

ROBERT FRIPP
Exposure
(Polygram)

Exposure is undoubtedly an important record, not only because it's Robert Fripp's first ever solo album, but also because it's the first recorded product bearing his name since the Fripp and Eno album *Evening Star*, made back in 1975. He has produced and contributed to several recordings since his supposed retirement after King Crimson, and many of those artists return the favour here.

So, among others, we get Eno, Peter Gabriel, Daryl Hall, Terre of The Roches, and Van Der Graaf's Peter Hammill. Other guests include Barry Andrews (late of XTC), Phil Collins from Genesis, Narada Michael Walden, and Blondie's Chris Stein, who designed the album cover.

Fripp opens the album with a short explanation before *Preface*. Suddenly, he butts in on the cut and apologises, saying he doesn't want it to start that way. Then a phone rings and someone walks over to answer it. As the receiver is lifted, the album commences. When it finishes, the receiver is put back and the person walks away.

The new beginning is *You Burn Me Up, I'm A Cigarette*, a hectic rock and roller that nods toward the new wave. Instead of the usual instrumental break in the middle, a deliberately inane but high-toned taped message from Shivapuri Baba is played. *Breathless* is the first King Crimson reminder, except that Fripp also blends in his "Frippertronics" - a treated guitar effect using tape machines he first learned from Eno with the *No Pussyfooting* album, and the projected title of his next album.

Frippertronics appear extensively throughout the record, but only occasionally do they approach the whitewash minimalist textures of those Eno collaborations, as in *Urban Landscape* and *Water Music I & II*. Like several other cuts, *Water I* features the voice of philosopher and self-styled prophet, J.G. Bennett, expounding on the imminence of the new ice age, which serves to introduce Peter Gabriel's *Here Comes The Flood*. Unlike the full treatment given to Gabriel's vocalese on his first solo album, this version features Gabriel's voice restrained, accompanied only by his piano and Fripp's background guitar effects.

That contrasts vividly with Peter Hammill's angst-ridden shout on *Disengage*, or with the Joni Mitchell-like *Mary* sung by Terre Roche, or the tender Daryl Hall performance on *North Star*, which is reminiscent of Fleetwood Mac's *Albatross*. Then there is the domestic argument set to the Crimson epic style in *N.Y.3* and the seemingly private comments which are cut up and spin in and out of the mix, scattered apparently erratically through the album.

But for me the most outstanding piece is the title cut, *Exposure*, an earlier version of which appeared on Peter Gabriel's second solo album. It is a Bowie style chunk of new musick, its inspiration probably coming from Fripp's work on *"Heroes"*. With the use of tape loops, it becomes a multi-layered chant revolving around the word "exposure" and another fragmentary message from J.G. Bennett - again debunked by a well-placed piece of "private" commentary.

The diversity of *Exposure* is at times too overwhelming to grasp at once, and in many ways, it is a totally self-indulgent work, or collection of works. But as an album of conviction and inspiration (often saved by Fripp's somewhat bent humour), it is beyond reproach. And fortunately, more than that, it is provocatively entertaining.

Bill Holdsworth

TUBEWAY ARMY
Replicas
(Atlantic)

Meet Gary Numan: choice young android fresh from the Electronic Pop-Rock wing of the Musician Factory, England Division. Numan looks like a male Jean Harlow, an "It" boy with cropped white hair, a pout and black fingernail polish. He has a vision: a brave new world which he paints with keyboards and electric guitars. He sings in pained, broadcasted tones. He writes the songs.

His group is called Tubeway Army and they took a track from this album, *Are 'Friends' Electric?*, to Number One in England. It was a heavily-textured, cool, lonely-sounding piece of music with synthesisers playing an almost orchestral arrangement. Disconnected; oddly moving in the world of crass pop and disco populating the English charts. Obediently, mother album *Replicas* rose beside *'Friends'* to the top of the album charts. Can it happen here? I hope so.

It seems easy for Gary Numan to project a world of atrophied emotion, science fiction of an on-the-street level, hearts that break upon sufficient metal stress. His lyrics give away a mixture of camera-like observation and muted distress towards his surroundings. Obsessions gnaw at him.

You Are In My Vision, musically catchier but less haunting than *'Friends'*: *"Staring at the ceiling/As she gyrates all around me/I'm trying to forget/She's done all this before..."* Distaste and alienation. You could be forgiven for guessing the writer doesn't like women much, yet the human need strikes a childish chord elsewhere: *"You know I hate to ask/But are 'friends' electric?/Only mine's broke down/And now I've no one to love."*

Musically *Replicas* moves in passages of music like David Bowie's slower moments on recent works. *Me, I Disconnect From You* could have been lifted from *Lodger* with its backwash of slow-phasing synthesiser, but the feeling it imparts is colder, less humane. Similarly, the title track *Replicas* could have come from *Low*. Distorted bass moves under a strangely accessible melody, as many of Numan's are; in a beautifully handled solo section, fighting guitars appear from nowhere to impress themselves on your memory and then disappear over the horizon like prehistoric hornets. The whole album, in fact, is strongly evocative in both the emotional and visual sense. Melancholic and lurid...

In the advance of the Electronic Pop-Rock horde, Tubeway Army are right at the front line.

Jenny Hunter-Brown

THE B-52'S
(Warner Bros)

The name is slang for tease-spray bouffant hairdos, as sported by wig-wearing group members Cindy (age 22: vocals/percussion/guitar) and Kate (31: vocals/organ/keyboard bass/guitar). The sound is like themes from Japanese cartoon shows for weenybcppers on arvo TV. The B-52's are an American fun group cleaning up in Britain after a July/August tour, and their first self-titled album is starting to go great guns all over the place.

Predictably, because the B-52's are real craze-fodder material. Their record sleeve is acid yellow, the band in their primal colour '50s threads on the front retouched to be flat caricatures. And the music could be grasped (and will be) by children of two to 50. Here is the band you've been waiting for to punk up *The Jetsons* cartoon theme. The B-52's *know* they're craze-fodder. They put their hobbies on their press release biography (which is laid out like a high-school project). They even tell you they're all single in case you dare to dream of dating them.

Cindy and Ricky Wilson (26: guitars) are genuine siblings. Remaining members are Keith Strickland (25: drums/percussion) and Fred Scheider III (27: vocals/organ/keyboard bass/guitar). The B-52's formed in Athens, Georgia, America, one night in October '76 when "after tropical drinks at a Chinese restaurant, we went to a friend's house and jammed."

Rock Lobster was already an infamous import hit through some airplay (notably by 2JJ) before this debutante album emerged. It tells the tale of a Gidget-type beach party wherein various marine flora and fauna catch the spirit and commence to frug about. Lyrics are gay, funny and kindergarten level:

"In walked a jellyfish
There goes a dog-fish
Chased by a cat-fish
In flew a sea robin
Watch out for that piranha
There goes a narwhale
HERE COMES A BIKINI WHALE!"

The B-52's (they all co-write) are no Bruce Springsteens, but then, who needs five Bruce Springsteens with bouffants? Lyrics are often nonsensical, often part-composed of lists, as in *52 Girls* (listing the *"principle girls of the USA"*, Jackie-O and all), *Dance This Mess Around* (which contains the classic lines: *"Why don't you dance with me/I'm not no Limburger"* and lists dances invented and otherwise), *There's A Moon In The Sky (Called The Moon)* (planets, stars etc), and *Lava* (volcanoes).

The clean, cartoonish sound is the background for shrill female and flatly-delivered male vocals, with some delightful vibrato/falsetto ooh-ahs and impassioned snarls acting like mantelpiece decorations over the top. A couple of tracks in, you're grinning, but a whole albumful begins to grate. Petula Clark's big hit of the '60s, *Downtown* (with bar noises, nicely messed-up drums and vocal asides), is the only non-original on the album.

Verdict: made to mass market.

Jenny Hunter-Brown

XTC
Drums And Wires
(Virgin)

XTC know how to write inspired little pop tunes. *Making Plans For Nigel* and *Ten Feet Tall*, the first and fourth tracks on this album prove that, but they approach their music in a wry and off-beat style - that's what makes this album so refreshing.

Like fellow musicians and admirers *Talking Heads*, XTC are moving towards a new primitivism - the beat's all important with drums mixed right up. The vocals don't follow pretty, civilised melody lines - they dip and dive, building into chants. Words often break right down into Esperanto sounds. Unwieldy words such as *"respirating"* and *"difficulty"* are played around with. The music builds up, then fragments, comes out sounding topsy turvy.

A deadpan humour runs through the lyrics, from Colin Moulding's gentle nudging in *Making Plans For Nigel* - *"We're only making plans for Nigel*
He has a future in British Steel
We're only making plans for Nigel
Nigel's whole future is as good as sealed..."
- to the more offbeat Andy

Partridge compositions -
"...We all safe in your concrete globe
Hail Mother motor
Hail Piston motor...."
(Roads Girdle The Globe).
Humour (a reaction to the unexpected) also runs through the music. XTC put hot next to cold, fast next to slow.

Millions, the second track on side two, jumps from sliding synthesiser lines to frenetic beats, back and forth several times. The song ends on a moody sax solo by Dick Cuthell. Almost before it's over, they've jumped into *That Is The Way*, one of the most frenetic of the 13 tracks.

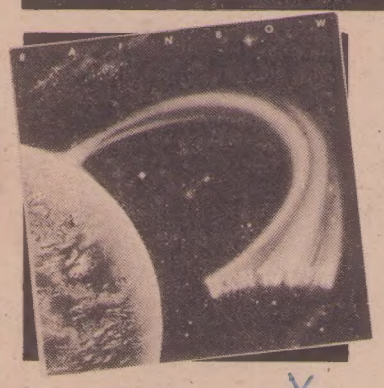
Complicated Game is like a childhood ditty with violent drum slashes throughout.

Limelight, the last track on the album, is a delightful send up of Lou Reed's melodramatic extravaganza *What A Feeling* (from the *Berlin* album). It begins with an intense breathy whisper and builds up into a modern-day *Sister Ray*. On this cacophany the record ends.

Drums And Wires is a beautifully packaged bundle. If this album's not pop, it's something better.

Miranda Brown

What's an "ex-Purple", Mom?



RAINBOW
Down To Earth
(Polydor)

For some guitar heroes (say hi to Jimmy) the fretboard goes on forever. For Ritchie Blackmore though, it's been a lean past three years. Funnily enough he seemed to be on a good thing after jumping the rapidly sinking Deep Purple ship in 1975 to form Rainbow.

A first patchy album to crank the new machine into gear, a vastly wonderful second effort that hurled thunderbolts of grand scale heavy rock bombast into the ozone. And then, well, nothing much. Line up changes aplenty, a patchy Australian tour, lots of trudging downhill around America, from headliner to second biller in two years. Meanwhile newer guitar hero models like Tom Scholz of Boston feedbacked up the mega-platinum lists...

It was obviously time to organise a better way or get out of the game, before someone thought of organising a Heavy Metal Revival Meet at Madison Square Garden for him.

Happily enough, *Down To Earth* showcases a new Blackmore machine that has strength and finesse. Power it has, not the blurred berserk blitzkrieg of a Motorhead, but real, clean, hammer-hits-the-anvil deep beat from drummer Cozy Powell and Purple cohort bssist Roger Glover. New voice Graham Bonnet exchanges trendy Dylan revamps for flat tack scream power. Ian Gillan he's not, but more finesse than the departed Ronnie James Dio, he's got. Keyboard player Don Airey settles into a role of providing contrapuntal doo-dahs to Blackmore's power-chording or else backgrounds the guitar solos with vast expansive washes of organ colouration. And, glory be, Blackmore sounds like he's *thinking* about what he's playing again. Taut, savage and fluid, he's one of the very few guitarists who can consistently accelerate you past the threshold of heavy metal boredom.

All this good playing and new attitude would go for zilch though if *Down To Earth* didn't have any songs worth applying it to. Happily Roger Glover is not only back on bass, he's producing and writing songs with Blackmore again. He hasn't exactly come up with another *Child In Time* or *Smoke On The Water* but the majestic might of *Eye Of The World* and the clean muscled riff-power arrangements in *All Night Long, Since You've Been Gone* and *Danger Zone* are aeons beyond the sludge Blackmore had been wading through on his past two or three albums. Sometimes, they *do* come back.

Anthony O'Grady

IAN GILLAN BAND
Live At Budokan
(Interfusion)

Budokan Hall in Tokyo is a popular place to record these days; here is yet another double live blockbuster captured there. It is not exactly new, being put down in September, 1977. As we have come to expect, the production is unquestionably good.

Just in case you were not aware, the cover of the album clearly advertises Ian Gillan was once "the voice of Deep Purple", so we may as well start with that band as a point of reference, especially since three of the ten cuts are workouts of old Deep Purple standards. The first indication of what you are in for is when you notice that the album spans some 82 minutes, so the tracks average out at over eight minutes apiece.

To spell it out, this is essentially prototype heavy metal, but there is a drift toward a cleverness that springs a few surprises. The opening track, *Clear Air Turbulence*, for instance, throws in several moments that would rest comfortably in any jazz rock album. Guitarist Ray Fenwick leaps into the fray with all sorts of fancy fret work. Likewise, keyboardist Colin Towns is not loath to contribute his share of blurred fingers across the ivories. And, of course, dominating throughout is the screaming Ian Gillan, who possesses one of the genuine archetypal sets of vocal equipment in rock.

Sometimes though, it does not make any sense. Like when the steaming H.M. stereotype *Money Lender* is split by this lilting break in the middle. The guitar, roaring moments before, suddenly acts like it has just discovered George Benson licks, while Gillan lowers his wail down to an approximation of a croon. Then seconds later, it's back into the maelstrom.

The three Deep Purple tracks are substantially reworked and stretched to the limit. *Smoke On The Water* and *Woman From Tokyo* retain strong connections to the originals despite this. *Child In Time* is slowed down and mellowed out to start with, but then becomes a vehicle for Gillan's most anguished performance.

Actually, I find Gillan's singing here the most difficult aspect to cope with. His penchant for screeching *"oohs"* and *"aahs"* at fever pitch wears thin in no time at all. Otherwise, this album shows the whole band in a good light, if only because they are attempting to do something new within a somewhat overworked area of rock.

Bill Holdsworth

The Sports

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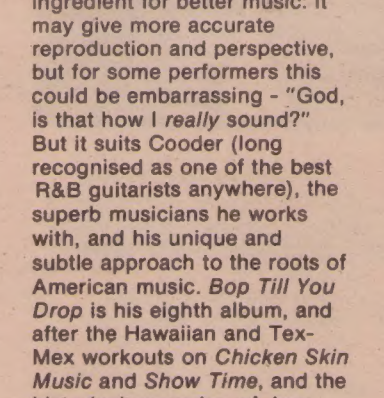

RY COODER
Bop Till You Drop
(WEA)

Put a new needle on your player, disengage all bias switches, and set the tone controls flat: drop on the new Ry Cooder and check the pure, delicious sound of "rock's first all-digital recording." (Digital recording uses a computer to convert sound into binary code; up until now, all recording has been 'analog' - a magnetic pattern corresponding to the sound's wave form is shaped on the recording tape. The digital process cuts out noise and distortion present in the best analog systems).

Like direct-to-disc recording, digital mastering is no miracle ingredient for better music: it may give more accurate reproduction and perspective, but for some performers this could be embarrassing - "God, is that how I *really* sound?" But it suits Cooder (long recognised as one of the best R&B guitarists anywhere), the superb musicians he works with, and his unique and subtle approach to the roots of American music. *Bop Till You Drop* is his eighth album, and after the Hawaiian and Tex-Mex workouts on *Chicken Skin Music* and *Show Time*, and the historical excursion of *Jazz*, he's returned to the basic R&B instrumentation of *Into The Purple Valley* and *Paradise and Lunch*. But now the feel is more rolling, the fills less blues-tinged, the odd bar length phrases that were a trademark have largely been dispensed with, and there's some genuine funk creeping in. If Ry Cooder eats *another* style, he'll burst.

Meanwhile, he's rocking steady with *Little Sister* (the old Presley hit). *Go Home Girl* is a slice of Cooder the Incurable Ham, as he despairs of being in love *"with the wife of my best friend"* over a backing as light and spacious as *Mexican Divorce*. *The Very Thing That Makes You Rich (Has Made Me Poor)* has a sombre gospel intro which kicks into a streamlined funk riff; lots of bands would love to have it down, but it's not great Cooder. The first side closes with a pretty, laid-back instrumental, with some slide playing that will make guitarists cry.

Down in Hollywood, the only Cooder composition (with bass player Tim Drummond), is a West Coast update on Stevie Wonder's *Living Just Enough For The City*, complete with 'street-talk', cars and cops, and Chaka Khan. It's delightfully cornball, as is *Trouble, You Can't Fool Me*. *Look At Granny Run* is the only track with the celebrated Cooder mandolin, and is closest in feel to the first four albums.

The material on *Bop Till You Drop* isn't as great as some earlier masterpieces, and has little to do with the title - there's about as much inspiration for frenzied dancing as a J.J. Cale record. But this band would sound good on a dirge...and Ry Cooder - sly, gritty, sentimental or funky butt - is forever magic.

Greg Taylor

THE BUSHWACKERS BAND
Bushfire
(Image)

The album is a collection of Irish-Australian bush ballads and instrumentals in the memory of the first (breaking) rockers and the big-boozing forefathers of our ignominious past.

Included are Richard and Linda Thompson's *Hard Luck Stories* and Lane/Clapton's *Annie* which tend to lighten the hysterical historical monotony.

Annie, with a slow and easy beat, includes a 'Sunday Afternoon at the Rotunda' sequence of horn, coronet and euphonium and Jan Wositzky's valiant attempt at the high notes which crack prematurely in an otherwise excellent gentle vocal arrangement.

One of the best cuts is *Van Dieman's Land* - band written and sung with great strength by Mick Slocum. A deep effective rhythm and catchy tune demand singalong choruses before you can say transportation: *'Young men, all, be aware/ lest you be drawn into a snare.'*

No one could ever equal Richard and Linda's vengeful style on *Hard Luck Stories* but Newton certainly has a good try. In case you haven't heard this earburner, catch it also on *Pour Down Like Silver*, or better still, pass it on to someone you absolutely detest: *'You don't like one thing you don't like another/ You don't like anything that looks like bother/ Everybody don't like something and we all don't like you...'*

Perhaps one day they'll be bold enough to turn their attention to the bloody murderous truths of the old days and resist the temptation to cash in quite so heavily on the crass colonialist capitalism that still leaves the real Australians bashed and bleeding in Redfern gutters.

Julian Reeves

singles

BOOMTOWN RATS - I Don't Like Mondays (Ensign) (import)
Apparently tells the story of an otherwise-retiring 16-year-old girl who opened fire on her school one day and wounded and killed several people. When asked why, she stated: "I don't like Mondays." Rats singer Bob Geldof, who wrote this, and fellow vermin have chosen this theme to lay down an astonishing Hollies-like melodramatic treatment with lyrical grand piano, massed chorus (very catchy) and the Rats held well at bay as far as rock'n'roll goes. No. 1 in the UK and Europe - but the good Rats are yet to have a hit here.

IAN DURY AND THE BLOCKHEADS - Reasons To Be Cheerful, Part 3 (Stiff)
Like an elevator operator reeling off department store wares, Ian recites a thousand and one reasons to be cheerful in just under five minutes.

Ludicrous funky-chicken backing, a couple of outgoing solos. Lovable Ian Dury. No *Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick*, but a good 'un nevertheless.

ADRIAN MUNSEY, HIS SHEEP WIND AND ORCHESTRA - The Lost Sheep (Virgin)

A wildly innocent and delightful concept right up there with Brian Eno's Portsmouth Sinphonia. This is a balding maniac in a suit enthusiastically baaseeching his charges to perform this "middle of the field" music. Results: a melancholy orchestral march backing a team of three disgruntled sheep who say *"bah!"* repeatedly (and tunefully). Wind crashes eerily towards the end, but the sheep, typically, remain unimpressed. Wool *The Lost Sheep* be a chart jumper?

WHA-KOO - Silken Chains Of Memory (Epic)

OK guys, ready? *"Bah!"* Pure synthetic trash.

THE NUMBERS - Govt. Boy (EP) (Local Label)

First outing from rated young Sydney power-pop trio. Features brother/sister team Annalise and Chris Morrow, with vocal sound oddly similar to that of brother-sister team Promises. The band plays a much rawer and less instantly accessible brand of music however. Like to see them get further from the standard punk mould - more originality. *Guerilla* is the most appealing song of the three, suffering from a guitar-heavy, vocal-light mix. A bit more arrangement and exploitation of a recording situation with overdubs would be nice. Next year's big thing? (*Local Label, PO Box 451, Doonside, NSW 2767*)

Jenny Hunter-Brown

tours

Mental As Anything
Sept
7 Stagedoor
9 War and Peace
14 The Royal Antler
15 Selinas
20 Civic Hotel
21 Macquarie Uni (early)
Settlement (late)
22 Local Inn
23 Manly Vale

Cold Chisel
Sept
7 Cloudland Ballroom, Bris
8 Jet Club, Bris
9 Easts Leagues, Bris
11 Ambassador Nite Club
12 Fairfield Hotel
13 Macquarie Uni
14 St John's College
15 Manly Flicks
16 Parramatta Leagues
17 Sundowner
18 ANU Canberra
19 Riverina CAE

Mi-Sex
Sept
8 Stagedoor
10 South Grafton RSL
11-16 Brisbane
19 Florida Hotel
21 Royal Antler

The Whittle Family
Sept
11 Canberra ANU
12 Sydney Rags
13 Governors Pleasure
14 NSW Uni (lunch)
Ocean Beach Hotel Umina
15 Manly Vale Hotel
17 Journeys End Wine Bar
18 Journeys End Wine Bar
19 Newcastle Uni
20 Misabotti via Macksville
21 Armidale Uni
22 Fowlers Lane, Byron Bay
23 Nimbin Bush Theatre

The Traders
Sept
7 Regent Hotel
8 Governor Bourke Hotel
12 Astra Hotel
14 Blue Rumours
19 Astra Hotel
21 Blue Rumours
26 Govenors Pleasure
27 Astra
28 The Local Inn

The Hitmen
Sept
7 Royal Antler
8 Fairfield
12 Fairfield
13 Macquarie Uni
14 Caringbah Inn
15 Stagedoor
Flicks
17 Sundowner
18 Coogee Bay

Numbers
Sept
7 Royal Antler
8 Stagedoor
Lidcombe Dancers
9 Frenchs
11 Frenchs
12 Fairfield Hotel
13 Forrest Inn
14 Salamander Hotel
15 Northern Subs Leagues
18 ANU Canberra
20 Forrest Inn
21 Sydney Uni

Hello Sailor
Sept
7 Coogee Bay
8 Blacktown RSL
9 Swansea Workers
20 Maroubra Seals
21 Blacktown Sports

Dragon
Sept
12 Vicar of Wakefield
13 Caringbah Inn
14 Bondi Lifesaver
15 Northern Subs Leagues
16 Manly Vale Hotel

Matchbox
Sept
19 Vicar of Wakefield
20 Governors Pleasure
21 Royal Antler
22 Sylvania Hotel
23 Swansea Workers

The Angels
Sept
7 Stagedoor
8 Civic Park, Newcastle
9 Parramatta Leagues

Flowers
Sept
7 Eastwood Hotel
8 Civic Park, N'castle (arvo)
Coogee Bay Hotel (nite)
9 Avalon RSL
19 Comb'n'Cutter
20 Fairfield Hotel
21 Macquarie Uni

Clones
Sept
7 Manning Bar
8 Bayview Tavern
11 Strata
13 Sylvania Hotel
14 Manning Bar
16 Astra
18 Strata
21 Manning Bar

Marc Hunter
Sept
11 Newcastle
12 Comb'n'Cutter
13 War'n'Peace
15 Brisbane Festival Hall
16 Stagedoor
19 Morwell Hotel
20 Eureka Hotel
21 Village Hotel
22 Bombay Rock
23 Ferntree Gully

Russell Morris
Sept
7 Mt Pleasant Sports
9 Lifesaver
13 Kamela Golf Club
14 Rooty Hill RSL
15 Fairfield Hotel
16 Penrith Leagues

Anne Kirkpatrick
Sept
8 Stardust Hotel

Stars
Sept
7 Lismore RSL
8 The Patch, Coolangatta
9 2SM Concert, Sydney
10 Bexley North Hotel
12 Revesby Workers Club
13 Petersham Girls High
14 Swansea Workers Club
17 Mt. Pleasant Workers
18 Doyalson RSL, Newcastle

Dallimore
Sept
7 Mt Pleasant Sports
8 Cardiff Soccer Club
9 Lifesaver
14 Mt Pleasant Sports
15 Lifesaver
16 Stagedoor

Jimmy & The Boys
Sept
7 Marconi
8 Flicks
9 Mayfield, Newcastle
13 Wollongong Uni
14 Fairfield Hotel
15 Sydney Cove Tavern
17 Bexley North

La Femme
Sept
7 Fairfield Hotel
8 Royal Antler
Metropole Tavern
14 Stockdale Hotel
15 Sydney Cove Tavern
21 Lifesaver

Lonely Hearts
Sept
7 Stagedoor
13 Fairfield Hotel
14 Comb'n'Cutter
15 Eastwood Hotel
21 Stockade Hotel
Sydney Uni (Womens Coll)

Morpheus
Sept
7 Florida Hotel
8 Florida Hotel
13 Selinas
14 Lifesaver
15 Lidcombe Dancers
20 Comb'n'Cutter

Reels
Sept
7 Ambassador
8 Stagedoor
14 Metropole Tavern
15 Stardust Hotel
21 Metropole Tavern

Gillian Eastoe
Sept
7 Stockade Hotel
8 Sydney Cove Tavern
10 Armadale Hotel, Vic.
11 Station Hotel
12 Gippsland Ins.
13 Croydon Hotel
14 Bombay Rock
15 Station Hotel
Bridge Hotel

Doug Parkinson
Sept
7-8 Strata
10 Sundowner
12 Manzil Room
14 Muso's Club
15 Muso's Club
16 Lifesaver
21 Strata & Muso's Club

Jon English
Sept
6 Home Hill
7 Cairns
8 Townsville
9 Mt. Isa
11 Rockhampton
12 Bundaberg
13 Maryborough
14 Toowoomba
15 Brisbane
16 Brisbane
20 Canberra
21 Canberra
22 Canberra
24 Wangarratta
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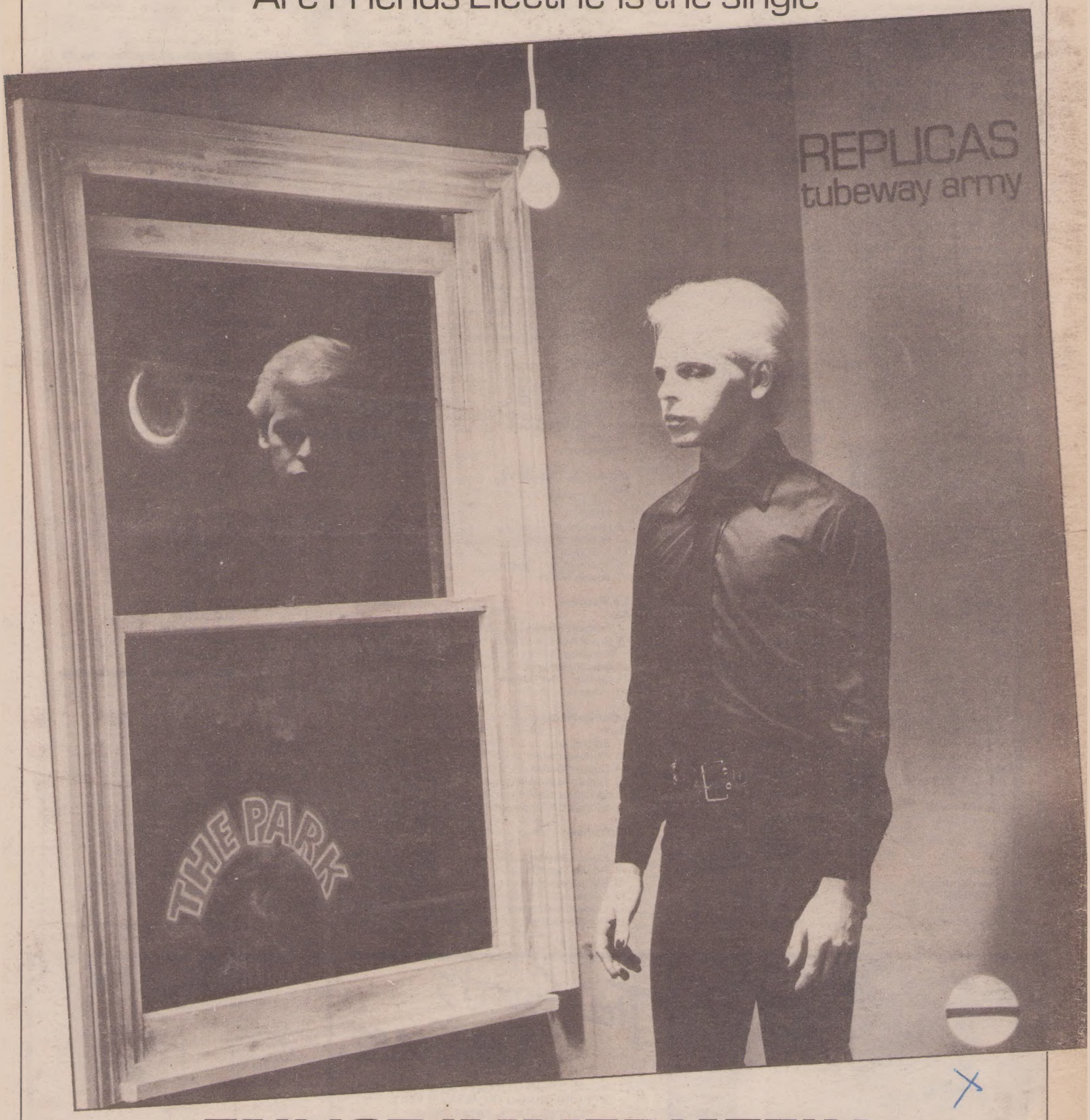

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